



# LOS ANGELES COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF REGIONAL PLANNING



Public Review Draft  
March 14, 2018

## Significant Ecological Areas (SEA) Ordinance **IMPLEMENTATION GUIDE**

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## SEA PROGRAM GUIDING PRINCIPLES

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### BIODIVERSITY:

- ❖ Recognize that biodiversity is important to creating a sustainable Los Angeles County.
  - ❖ Identify and protect the places where biodiversity exist in Los Angeles County.
  - ❖ Create new places where biodiversity can be woven through the urban fabric.
  - ❖ Ensure that the legacy of the unique biotic diversity is passed on to future generations.
- 

### RESILIENCY:

- ❖ Ensure that individual SEAs are able to thrive by reducing fragmentation, and creating or preserving connectivity and habitat functionality.
  - ❖ Monitor development within SEAs to maximize preservation.
  - ❖ Encourage best practices for sustainable design in the SEAs that are aligned with natural resources.
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### PUBLIC SERVICE:

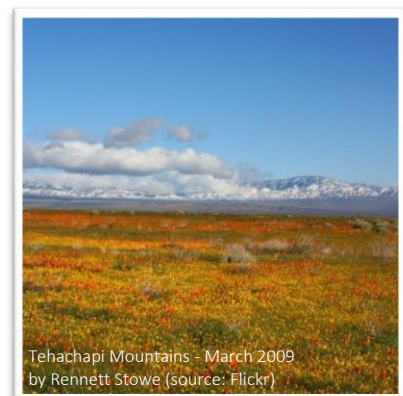
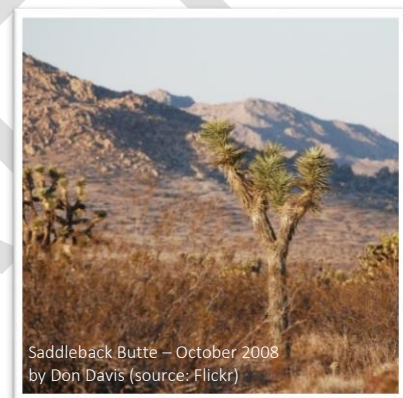
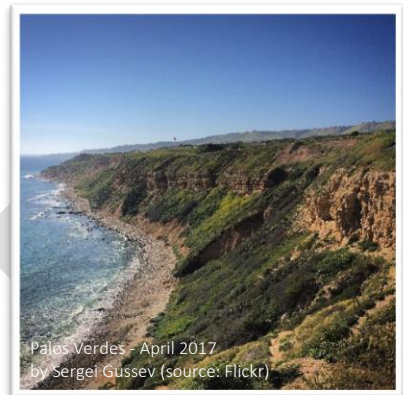
- ❖ Ensure the continuation of natural ecosystem services that improves quality of life for all who live in Los Angeles County.
- ❖ Ensure that property rights are maintained in the SEAs through providing clear guidelines and expectations about the requirements for development in SEAs.

## CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION TO THE SIGNIFICANT ECOLOGICAL AREAS (SEA) PROGRAM

Los Angeles County (“County”) is host to one of the most remarkable assortments of biological diversity in North America. Natural communities in the County extend from the Pacific Ocean to the Mojave Desert, with coastal plains and valleys, a 10,000-foot tall mountain range, and hills and canyons in every orientation in between. This irreplaceable diversity of natural and biological resources is our heritage, and the reason for which the County developed the Significant Ecological Area (SEA) Program.

The biodiversity of the County is a product of the forces that shaped California; and its variety corresponds directly to the variety of places in the County where we choose to live. The feelings and images we associate with these locations are inextricably entwined in the biota they support. Imagine Palos Verdes without California sagebrush; Saddleback Butte without Joshua trees and creosote; the Tehachapi Mountains without vibrant wildflower fields; the Puente Hills without black walnut and coast live oak; or San Antonio Canyon without California scalebroom, white alder, and western sycamore. Even if you are not familiar with the names of these plants, it doesn’t matter—you recognize these places in large part because of their characteristic vegetation and habitats.

Nature is slow, and the landscape that supports nature is changing, in some cases more rapidly than nature can keep up. Much of this change has already taken place—the San Fernando Valley was once an oak savanna; the western Antelope Valley was once a Joshua-juniper forest. Some of the changes we face may be out of our control, but many are within our ability to shape. Siting development to avoid obvious detrimental impacts to biota is the biggest part of the SEA program and is an effective method for protecting the important biodiversity of Los Angeles County.



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IT TOOK A VERY LONG TIME FOR THIS BIODIVERSITY TO BE GENERATED AND DISTRIBUTED THROUGHOUT THE COUNTY THE WAY WE SEE IT TODAY, AND THE LAND USE DECISIONS WE MAKE TODAY WILL PERMANENTLY AFFECT THE BIODIVERSITY WE LEAVE FOR THE FUTURE.

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## SEA PROGRAM COMPONENTS

The SEA Program was originally established as a part of the 1980 County General Plan, to help conserve the genetic and physical diversity within Los Angeles County through designating biological resource areas capable of sustaining themselves into the future. The General Plan 2035 (“General Plan”) updated the SEA boundary maps, goals and policies in 2015.

SEAs are areas where the County deems it important to facilitate a balance between development and biological resource conservation. Where occurring within SEAs, development activities are carefully reviewed with a key focus on site design as a means for conserving fragile resources such as streams, woodlands, and threatened or endangered species and their habitats. The SEA Program does not change the land use designation or the zoning of a property; rather it uses biological review and the application of certain development standards to balance the preservation of the County’s natural biodiversity with private property rights.

The SEA Program consists of the following components, which are discussed in further detail below:

- 1) The SEA Goals and Policies found in the Conservation and Natural Resources Element of the Los Angeles County General Plan 2035;
- 2) The SEA Boundary Map also found in the Los Angeles County General Plan 2035; and
- 3) The SEA Ordinance of the County Zoning Code.

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### SEA GOALS AND POLICIES (GENERAL PLAN 2035, CONSERVATION AND NATURAL RESOURCES ELEMENT)

[Chapter 9](#), Conservation and Natural Resources Element, of the General Plan establishes goals and policies for SEAs. Areas of the County designated as SEAs satisfy at least one of the following six SEA Selection Criteria:

- A. Habitat of core populations of endangered or threatened plant or animal species.
- B. On a regional basis, biotic communities, vegetative associations, and habitat of plant or animal species that are either unique or are restricted in distribution.
- C. Within the County, biotic communities, vegetative associations, and habitat of plant or animal species that are either unique or are restricted in distribution
- D. Habitat that at some point in the life cycle of a species or group of species, serves as concentrated breeding, feeding, resting, migrating grounds and is limited in availability either regionally or in the County.
- E. Biotic resources that are of scientific interest because they are either an extreme in physical/geographical limitations or represent unusual variation in a population or community.
- F. Areas that would provide for the preservation of relatively undisturbed examples of the original natural biotic communities in the County

[Appendix E](#) of the General Plan includes detailed descriptions of each SEA, including boundaries, representative resources, wildlife movement opportunities, and designation criteria analysis. The SEA designation does not identify every individual biotic resource, and SEAs are not preserves or conservation

areas; rather, SEAs are areas in which planning decisions are made with extra sensitivity toward biological resources and ecosystem functions.

### SEA BOUNDARY MAP (GENERAL PLAN 2035, FIGURE 9.3)

The General Plan 2035 established the current SEA boundaries, as depicted on the [SEA Policy Map \(Figure 9.3\)](#). In order to facilitate maintenance of sufficient habitat and to promote species movement, the SEAs were mapped over large areas of undisturbed or lightly disturbed land, linking together and supporting regional resources, such as agricultural lands, forests, mountains, canyons, and open space.



The SEA Policy Map depicts 21 SEAs, nine Coastal Resource Areas (CRAs)<sup>1</sup>, and two areas with conceptual SEAs. Four SEAs are located entirely outside of the County's jurisdiction, while 12 others have portions located within incorporated cities. The SEA Policy Map shows CRAs, SEAs within cities, and Conceptual SEAs for reference and visual continuity only. The SEA Program applies solely to the 17 SEAs located within unincorporated areas.

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## SEA ORDINANCE (TITLE 22 PLANNING AND ZONING CODE)

The SEA Ordinance implements the goals and policies of the General Plan by establishing permitting requirements, design standards, and review processes for development within SEAs. The goal of the SEA Ordinance is to guide development to the least impactful areas on a property in order to avoid adverse impacts to biological resources. The level of SEA assessment is dependent on the area of disturbance, sensitivity of biological resources impacted, and consistency with development standards. Chapter 2 explains the SEA assessment process in more detail.

## SEA IMPLEMENTATION GUIDE

The purpose of this SEA Implementation Guide ("Guide") is to provide an overview of the SEA Program, guidance for reviewing proposed development in SEAs, and counseling to the public on appropriate development within SEAs. As its name suggests, this document should guide implementation of the SEA Program and clarify regulatory language in the SEA Ordinance, and as such, it should always be used in conjunction with goals and policies of the General Plan, the SEA boundary maps, and the SEA Ordinance regulations.

This Guide contains tools and information for:

- ❖ identifying and prioritizing SEA Resources present on a project site;
- ❖ complying with SEA Development Standards;
- ❖ understanding the SEA assessment process, including permit requirements and analysis;
- ❖ guiding project design to avoid impacts to SEA Resources;
- ❖ meeting open space preservation requirements; and
- ❖ monitoring the overall effectiveness of the SEA Program in protecting resources.

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## CHANGES TO THIS GUIDE

This Guide does not provide additional policies or regulatory provisions and is only to be used to clarify goals, policies, ordinance provisions, and processes. Please refer to the SEA Ordinance within Title 22 of the Los Angeles County Code for the specific SEA Ordinance regulations.

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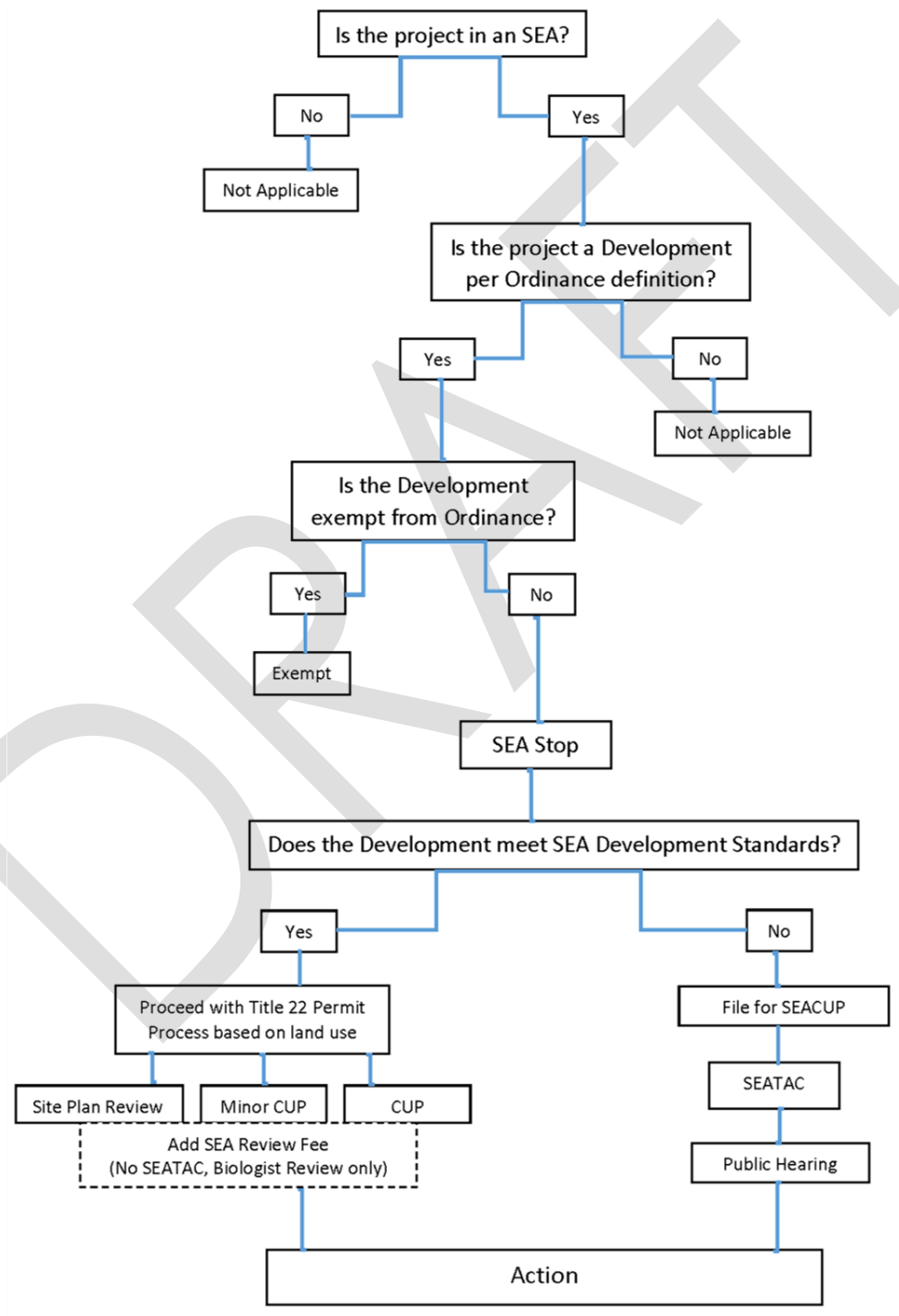
<sup>1</sup> CRAs include biological resources equal in significance to SEAs, but, since they occur in the coastal zone, they fall under the authority of the California Coastal Commission. Ecological resources of CRAs are protected by specific provisions within an area's certified local coastal program.

The SEA assessment process described within this Guide reflects current and best practices of the Department of Regional Planning (“Department”). This Guide will be updated as necessary by the Director to reflect current permit processing practice. This Guide does not change or revise existing regulatory provisions found within the SEA Ordinance, General Plan, or other applicable regulations or policies of the Los Angeles County Zoning Code or General Plan.

DRAFT

## CHAPTER 2. SEA ORDINANCE ASSESSMENT PROCESS

For projects within SEAs, an additional assessment is required in conjunction with standard planning review of a land use application. The SEA assessment process is primarily focused on the question of how the development would disturb existing native species and natural features on the project site. The level of analysis required is dependent on the amount of impacts to SEA Resources and the amount proposed open space to be preserved on-site. The SEA assessment process is outlined in the flowchart below.



## INFORMATION GATHERING

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### IS THE PARCEL IN AN SEA?

The review process begins when a project site<sup>2</sup> is identified as being located fully or partially within an SEA. This information is available on DRP's online GIS application or by speaking to a planner at the Land Development Coordinating Center (LDCC), otherwise known as the "Front Counter", or a DRP Field Office.

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### IS THE PROJECT CONSIDERED A DEVELOPMENT WITHIN AN SEA?

If a project site is identified as being located fully or partially within an SEA, the next question is whether the development will be occurring within an SEA. The SEA Ordinance classifies some activities as development that may not be considered development under other sections of the code. For example, exploratory testing is a permitted use under the SEA Ordinance. Refer to the Definitions section of the Ordinance for a detailed list of activities considered to be development.

If the entire development, including any fuel modification, will be outside of the SEA, the SEA Ordinance is not applicable to the project. If any part of the development will be within the SEA, then the next step is to confirm whether the project is exempt from the Ordinance or not.

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### IS THE PROJECT EXEMPT FROM THE ORDINANCE?

The SEA Ordinance exempts certain land uses from SEA analysis. If the project is found to be exempt from the SEA Ordinance, no further review under the SEA Ordinance is needed. Refer to the Exemptions section of the Ordinance for a full list of exemptions or Chapter 4 of this Guide for a more detailed explanation of each exemption.

For all other projects within SEAs that are not exempt, the applicant will need to hire a SEATAC Certified Biologist<sup>3</sup> to prepare a Biological Constraints Map (BCM) for the project site (see Chapter 5). The BCM will identify and map priority biological areas and other natural resources on and near to the project site, which need to be considered and avoided. Assessing the biological constraints on a project site at the onset of project design will help guide development to the least impactful location on the property. When siting the project, it is important to consider the amount of vegetation disturbance and the ability for the project to comply with the prescribed setbacks and preservation requirements in the SEA ordinance.

At this time, the applicant should also be forming a project team (e.g. architect, engineer(s), landscape architect, etc.) and starting the preliminary design of the project. Applicants are encouraged to have the BCM prepared early in the design process before fully developing architectural or engineered plans. The BCM should be utilized in the same way that a geologic constraints map would be used: to determine the most appropriate locations for the various components of the project based on the constraints (in this case biological) of the landscape. This initial phase of laying out the placement of the project is called the

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<sup>2</sup> The project site includes all parcels and/or lots that are wholly or partially impacted by the project.

<sup>3</sup> Found online at <http://planning.lacounty.gov/agenda/seatac>

Conceptual Project Design. See Chapter 4 (Permit Analysis) for information regarding what is required in a Conceptual Project Design.

### SEA COUNSELING – THE “SEA-STOP”

An SEA-Stop is required for all non-exempt projects within an SEA, unless waived by the Director. At his or her sole discretion, the Director may waive the SEA-Stop or BCM requirement where he or she deems it unnecessary to determining the appropriate SEA assessment process. A project is ready to schedule an SEA-Stop when either the applicant needs additional project specific guidance in order to incorporate all of the development standards into the Conceptual Project Design, or when the project has been designed with the least amount of impacts to SEA Resources and is ready to move forward with detailed design plans.

At the SEA-Stop, the applicant will meet with a Case Planner and County Biologist who will review the BCM and Conceptual Project Design and will determine whether the proposed project will require an SEA Review (ministerial) or SEA Conditional Use Permit (“SEA CUP”, discretionary). At the election of the prospective applicant, the SEA-Stop may be combined with a Zoning Permits or Land Divisions One-Stop to review the conceptual plan for consistency with Titles 21 and/or 22 at the same time.

#### WHEN SEA-STOP AND/OR BCM MAY BE WAIVED

- ✓ Project consists exclusively of exploratory testing or other temporary activity occurring entirely within a paved area such as a highway, street, road, or driveway;
- ✓ Project consists of renewal of a wireless facility in the public right-of-way with little to no discernable changes to the existing facility, including replacement poles of the same height and in the same location as poles being replaced;
- ✓ An SEA CUP is clearly inevitable due to the proposed project’s scale or use, hence requiring a BCA and Biota Report and making the SEA-Stop and BCM unnecessary or redundant; or
- ✓ Applicant formally requests an SEA CUP (including SEATAC) foregoing any possibility of SEA Review and agreeing to the SEA CUP process.

#### DOES THE DEVELOPMENT MEET SEA DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS?

Development that is consistent with the SEA Development Standards will qualify for an SEA Review per County Code Section 22.102.060, which is a ministerial review process that does not require additional biological reports or mitigation measures, and ensures compliance with all pertinent development standards once the application is submitted. Development that cannot comply with the required SEA Development Standards will require an SEA Conditional Use Permit per Section 22.102.070, which is a discretionary review process that requires additional biological reports, mitigation measures, SEA Technical Advisory Committee (SEATAC) review, and a public hearing.

At the conclusion of the SEA-Stop, the Case Planner and County Biologist will recommend an SEA review type for the project. This determination will address whether:

- 1) the BCM adequately documents the biological resources on the project site, and
- 2) the Conceptual Project Design adequately demonstrates the ability of the project to comply with the SEA Development Standards.

If the initial conceptual design does not demonstrate compliance with the applicable SEA Development Standards, Department Staff may provide guidance for evaluating alternative design options, and the applicant will have the opportunity to redesign the project before moving forward with the application process. Alternatively, the applicant may choose to move forward with an SEA CUP, in which case the County Biologist will provide guidance on what additional biological reports will be required (Chapter 5).

It is important to note that the SEA-Stop analysis and recommendation may change if the development footprint of the proposed project changes substantially from that which was reviewed at the SEA-Stop. For this reason, it is recommended that an additional SEA-Stop be scheduled whenever a redesign has occurred to re-evaluate the project impact on SEA Resources and determine which type of SEA assessment will be needed.

#### **FILE PROJECT APPLICATION/STAFF REVIEW**

After the SEA-Stop and other relevant project counseling (e.g. One-Stop), the applicant should proceed with the full project design and preparation of all required application materials for the appropriate land use permits and SEA assessment. Once all materials have been prepared, the applicant should file the required application(s) and pay required fees.

The applicant will file for the SEA assessment type that was recommended at the conclusion of the SEA-Stop. After the full application has been submitted, Department Staff will begin the appropriate level of SEA assessment (ministerial or discretionary). However, if substantial changes to the development footprint have been made since the SEA-Stop determination and have not been reviewed by the County Biologist, Department Staff may re-evaluate the correct SEA assessment process based on the new information presented.

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#### **SEA REVIEW (MINISTERIAL)**

There is no separate permit or application form for an SEA Review (Section 22.102.060). Since the SEA Review is a ministerial review, it will be incorporated into the appropriate land use permit of the project with an additional SEA Review fee. The Case Planner, in consultation with the County Biologist, will verify that the SEA Development Standards have been incorporated into the project design. A site visit by the County Biologist may be necessary at this time to confirm site conditions<sup>4</sup>. Once it is determined that the project is consistent with the SEA Ordinance, the Case Planner will verify that the SEA Review of the project is complete and continue with processing the land use permit.

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<sup>4</sup> Generally the need for a site visit will be determined at the SEA-Stop, but the visit will not occur until after the application has been filed.

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## SEA CUP (DISCRETIONARY)

When development does not meet the SEA Development Standards, an SEA CUP will be required to consider whether the project is compatible with the goals and policies of the SEA Program. The SEA CUP will analyze both land use and impacts to SEA Resources. It requires a submittal of a complete CUP application package, SEA CUP and related fees, and additional required biological review.

During the SEA CUP review process, the County Biologist will conduct a site visit, review the Biological Constraints Analysis (BCA) and any other necessary reports (such as protocol surveys, wetland delineations, oak tree reports, etc.), and work with the applicant to develop appropriate mitigation and monitoring strategies, which will be documented in a Biota Report. All SEA CUPs are also subject to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). The Case Planner will provide additional information and guidance on complying with the CEQA process on a case by case basis.

## SEATAC REVIEW

Most projects which require an SEA CUP will also require additional review by the Significant Ecological Area Technical Advisory Committee (“SEATAC”). SEATAC is a panel of independent experts who assist the Department in assessing a project’s impact on biological resources within SEAs. A project may be scheduled for a SEATAC meeting once the Case Planner and County Biologist have verified that all application filing materials are complete, adequate, and ready for SEATAC review. SEATAC purview consists of the following:

- ❖ Determination of adequacy of the biological constraints analysis and biota report,
- ❖ Recommendations for project features or mitigation measures to minimize the proposed impacts to SEA Resources, and
- ❖ Recommendation on the project’s compatibility with the SEA Ordinance and Program.

After the project has gone through the appropriate biological and environmental review, the Case Planner will evaluate the project against the SEA Ordinance’s required findings for approval and require any appropriate conditions of approval before the project is taken to Public Hearing.

For more information on SEATAC procedures, refer to the SEATAC Procedural Manual maintained on the Department website<sup>5</sup>.

## PUBLIC HEARING

The last step of the SEA CUP process is a public hearing. Projects which go through a SEATAC review and are found to have minimal impacts to SEA Resources may be scheduled for a public hearing before a Hearing Officer. Projects which propose substantial impacts to SEA Resources will be scheduled for a public hearing before the Regional Planning Commission (“RPC”).

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<sup>5</sup> <http://planning.lacounty.gov/agenda/seatac>

## CHAPTER 3. DESIGN

Development standards set forth minimum requirements and maximum allowances (e.g., minimum setbacks from a street or maximum height of a structure). The SEA Ordinance establishes development standards to ensure that development is designed in a manner that supports the long-term sustainability of each SEA. Projects must comply with all development standards in order to obtain approval, or they may request modification of development standards through an SEA Conditional Use Permit. This chapter provides additional guidance and information to assist applicants with understanding and meeting development standards, as well as some best practices for designing development in a way that is compatible with SEA resources.

### RECOMMENDED DESIGN GUIDELINES FOR PROJECTS WITHIN SEAS

1. Locate new development as close to existing development and roadways as possible.
2. Cluster structures and infrastructure within 30% or less of the lot area (including roads, utilities, landscaping, and fire management requirements) and maintain the remaining portions of the site in a natural undisturbed state.
3. Place utilities underground and adjacent to roadways (i.e. within the right of way).
4. Avoid placing any development on slopes greater than 25%.
5. Locate development away from wildlife corridors and use only wildlife permeable perimeter fencing outside of development to allow wildlife to move easily through the undeveloped portion of the project site.
6. Locate development away from the most sensitive natural resources and protect those resources and contiguous natural areas as open space.
7. Do not alter, grade, build upon, fill or divert water from any wetland area. Maintain minimum buffers around such areas, as specified in the SEA Development Standards.
8. Do not alter, grade, fill or build within any part of the 100-year flood plain of a river or stream.
9. Avoid removal of native trees, such as oak, walnut, sycamore, juniper, and Joshua trees (see Native Tree List in Appendix A).
10. Landscape with plant materials that are locally indigenous and drought-tolerant.
11. Direct outdoor lighting downward and away from adjacent natural areas.

### SEA RESOURCES

The SEA Ordinance defines *SEA Resources* as “the biological and physical natural resources that contribute to and support the biodiversity of SEAs and the ecosystem services they provide.” In Chapter 1, the concept of biodiversity and its importance to maintaining the character of LA County was introduced. Biodiversity, at its core, is simply the variety of life that occurs in a particular place. While biodiversity speaks to the diversity of living organisms, it is the combination of those living organisms (plants, animals, fungi, microbes, etc.) and the physical natural resources (non-living resources such as water, rocks, minerals, and air) that make up an *ecosystem*.

Many interactions take place within an ecosystem between the living organisms and their physical environment, and these chemical, biological, geochemical, or physical interactions provide the ecosystem with the raw materials it needs to continue to thrive. Many of these interactions, or *ecosystem functions*, also provide direct and indirect benefits to people. Such benefits are known as *ecosystem services*, and include things like clean air and water, fertile soils, pollination, raw materials in the form of foods, biofuels, and medicinal resources, protection from natural disasters like floods and droughts, and regulation of temperatures. There are also many social and cultural services provided by healthy, functioning ecosystems, such as scenic views and opportunities for recreation, tourism, culture, art, and design. The continued ability of our local ecosystems to provide the ecosystem services and biodiversity that we enjoy in LA County today depends in large part on ensuring adequate protections for the resources themselves, many of which are concentrated within and adjacent to SEAS.

To that end, the SEA Ordinance divides SEA Resources into five categories, with each category afforded a certain level of protection consistent with its relative abundance in the County and sensitivity to disturbance. Categories 1 through 3 are referred to in the Ordinance as Priority Biological Resources. SEA Resources are divided into categories based on the following factors:

- ❖ sensitivity to impacts of development;
- ❖ relative scarcity within the state, County, or SEA;
- ❖ role in supporting populations of species and ecosystem services;
- ❖ and ability to recover from disturbance (resilience).

The SEA Ordinance relies largely on existing standards, requirements, and thresholds already in use by state, federal, and county resource agencies and authorities. Each category is described in more detail below. The SEA Ordinance includes specific development standards for SEA Resource Categories 1 through 4. Other area-wide and land use specific development standards are intended to preserve valuable elements of Category 5 SEA Resources.

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### SEA RESOURCE CATEGORY 1

No amount of disturbance<sup>6</sup> to resources in this category is allowed, as they are of the highest sensitivity and vulnerability in the region. Most of these resources also have state or federal regulations in place to protect them. Therefore, projects proposing disturbance to Category 1 SEA Resources will require an SEA CUP with SEATAC review and a public hearing and will likely also trigger permitting requirements from other state or federal agencies (e.g. USFWS, Army Corps, CDFW, etc.).

Additionally, mitigation for impacts to these resources is sometimes not a viable option because they are so rare, difficult to detect, or have habitats that are next to impossible to re-create. SEA Resources that fall into this category include the following:

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<sup>6</sup> Disturbance includes clearing or thinning of vegetation for fuel modification and fire protection purposes.



#### ENDANGERED, THREATENED, OR RARE PLANTS AND ANIMALS:

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) administers the Federal Endangered Species Act (FESA), which provides a process for listing species as endangered and threatened, and provides guidance for protecting those listed species and the habitats upon which they depend. The California Endangered Species Act (CESA) prohibits the take of any fish, wildlife, or plant species designated by the California Fish and Game Commission as endangered, threatened, or candidate species. The California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) oversees the species protected by CESA. Both the federal and state regulations prohibit the take of any listed endangered or threatened plant or animal species, including the destruction of a listed species' habitat. All species protected under FESA or CESA are Category 1 SEA Resources. For the purposes of the SEA Program, both the protected species and their occupied habitat are Category 1 SEA Resources.



#### CALIFORNIA RARE PLANT RANKS 1A OR B, 2A OR B, AND 3:

CDFW works in collaboration with the California Native Plant Society (CNPS) and with botanical experts to maintain an inventory of California's sensitive plant species. This inventory consists of a ranking system known as the California Rare Plant Ranks (CRPR), which officially defines and categorizes the level of rarity of California's plants based on known information about the rarity, geographic range, and ecological requirements of each species. All the plants ranked 1A, 1B, 2A, 2B, and 3 meet the definitions of the CESA, are eligible for state listing, and are Category 1 SEA Resources. More detailed information about the CNPS Rare Plant Program can be found online at <http://www.cnps.org/cnps/rareplants/>.



#### CRITICALLY IMPERILED NATURAL COMMUNITIES<sup>7</sup> (G1/S1):

Natural communities with a global rank of G1 or a state rank of S1 are considered to be "critically imperiled". Critically imperiled natural communities are at very high risk of extinction due to extreme rarity (often with only six or fewer populations remaining worldwide or statewide, and/or up to 1,000 hectares remaining), very steep declines, and other factors. Since they have extremely limited distribution statewide and globally and are highly vulnerable to the impacts of development projects, no amount of disturbance to G1/S1 natural communities is allowed without an SEA CUP. See the text box on this page for addition information regarding natural communities.

<sup>7</sup> Since 1999, CDFW has undertaken the classification and mapping of natural communities throughout the state of California. One purpose of this classification is to assist in determining the level of rarity and imperilment of natural communities throughout the state. CDFW's current list rates 350 vegetation alliances and over 2,100 associations with a G (global) and S (state) rank according to their degree of imperilment following NatureServe's Heritage Methodology (<http://www.natureserve.org/conservation-tools/conservation-status-assessment>).



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#### WATER RESOURCES:

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Water resources are highly vulnerable and complex hydrologic and biotic systems that are capable of supporting a vast range of important ecosystem functions. Since they are so sensitive to changes that occur along their boundaries and within their watersheds, the SEA Ordinance goes beyond prohibiting development within their boundaries, to requiring additional buffers between proposed developments and the water resources. See section “B. Water Resources” below for more details.

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### SEA RESOURCE CATEGORY 2

This category includes species and natural communities that are rare, sensitive, or highly important to maintaining the biodiversity and ecosystem services within SEAs. Only minimal amounts of disturbance may be allowed to these resources, as discussed below.



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#### IMPERILED NATURAL COMMUNITIES (G2/S2):

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Natural communities with a global rank of G2 or a state rank of S2 are considered “imperiled”. Imperiled natural communities are at high risk of extinction or elimination due to very restricted range, very few populations (6-20 viable occurrences remaining worldwide or statewide, and/or from 1,000 to 2,000 hectares remaining), steep declines, or other factors.



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#### OAK WOODLANDS:

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LA County has long prioritized the protection of oaks, starting with enacting the Oak Tree Ordinance in 1982, and subsequently through the adoption of the LA County Oak Woodlands Conservation Management Plan in 2011. The Oak Woodlands Conservation Management Plan changed the way the Department reviews projects that occur within or near oak woodlands. The main goal of the plan is to conserve oak woodlands in perpetuity with no permanent net loss of existing woodlands. As such, although many natural communities dominated by oak trees are ranked as being less rare or sensitive in the CDFW Natural Communities list, the County regards them as essential to the maintenance of biodiversity and ecosystem services within SEAs and places them in a more protective category.



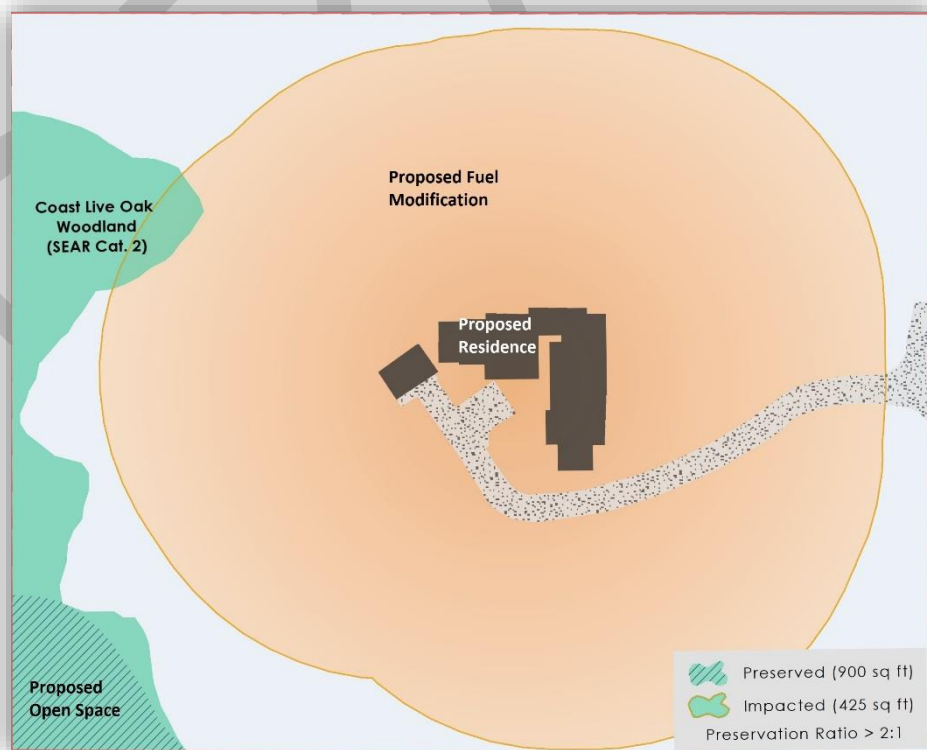
#### SENSITIVE LOCAL NATIVE RESOURCES:

Some species and natural communities are much rarer or more significant on a local scale than they are on a global, state, or even regional scale. For this reason, the Department maintains a list of native resources that are rare or significant within the County or specific SEAs (Appendix B). Any species included on this list will be treated as a Category 2 resource within the region(s) indicated on the list, regardless of its state and global rankings.

The SEA Ordinance does not allow more than 500 square feet of cumulative disturbance to SEA Resource Category 2. Additionally, for impacts to these resources up to 500 square feet, the project must set aside a larger area (at least twice the size of that to be disturbed) of the same type of SEA Resources. Preserved areas must be protected in perpetuity and maintained in a natural condition. All other relevant development standards must also be met, including the required setbacks from native trees occurring within the area to be disturbed.

To meet the requirements of the development standard, the area to be preserved must be:

1. the same type of SEA Resource(s) as that being disturbed,
2. located entirely outside of the development footprint of the proposed project,
3. located outside of any existing fuel modification/brush clearance zones of neighboring structures,
4. at least two-times the size of the area disturbed, and
5. recorded through a permanent on-site deed restriction or covenant (see Chapter 7).



## WHY ARE OAK WOODLANDS SO IMPORTANT TO LOS ANGELES COUNTY?

Adapted from the *Los Angeles County Oak Woodlands Conservation Management Plan*:

Oak woodlands are much more than a collection of individual trees. Associated with those trees, are over 300 vertebrate species and more than 5,000 invertebrates, not to mention hundreds of native plant species. Entering oak woodlands, you experience the complex interconnections of the trees, plants, and animals that create a dynamic living system.

Oak woodlands provide essential ecosystem function services, at little to no cost. The canopies of oaks filter out air pollution, absorb carbon dioxide, and create islands of welcome shade and cooler temperatures. Hillsides covered with oaks provide erosion control through roots that hold the soil and foliage that diffuses rainfall, allowing it to percolate into the ground. Stream banks shaded by oaks slow down floodwaters and help filter out water pollutants.

Oak woodlands provide extensive recreational opportunities that are easily accessed by the huge urban population of Los Angeles County. The health benefits provided by access to trails that wind through the oaks are immeasurable. For many people, a walk through the oaks is a welcome stress relief. Real estate prices for homes in or near oak woodlands are consistently higher than those without oaks or other natural spaces.

Oak woodlands are an iconic part of the visual landscape of Los Angeles County. The daily commute of millions is enhanced by views of oak studded hillsides along crowded freeways. Oaks and humans have a long history of interdependence. While few people today rely on acorns as a dietary staple, living in and among oak woodlands is clearly still important to many of us.

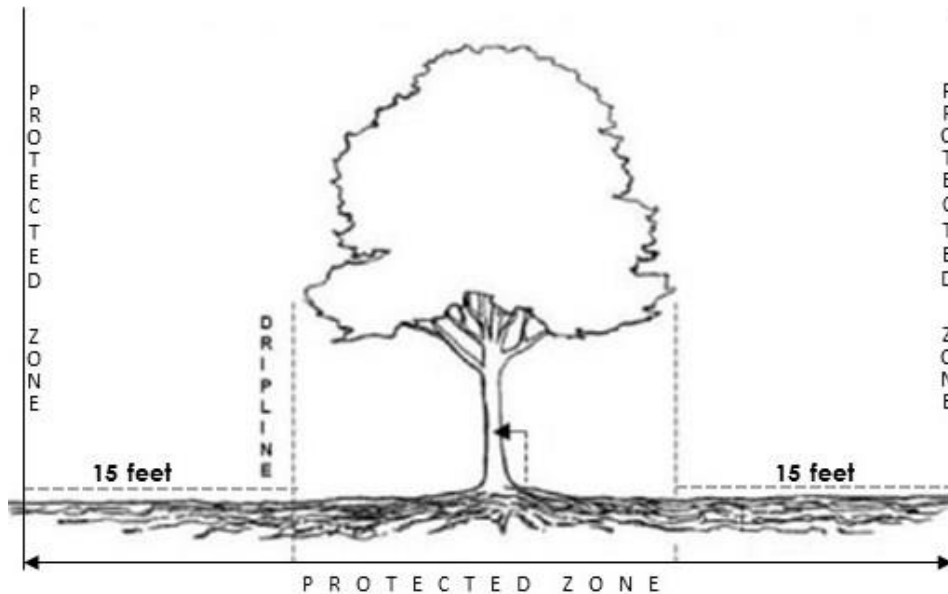


### NATIVE TREES:

Native trees are those that evolved and occur naturally in the region. A list of trees that are native to Los Angeles County and protected through the SEA Ordinance is included in Appendix A. Note that not every tree species that is native to Los Angeles County has been included in this list; rather the list represents native tree species that are at most risk of impacts from development.

Maintaining and protecting native trees in SEAs is important not only for the health and perpetuation of the SEAs, but also for the welfare of the county as a whole. Healthy trees provide benefits for public health (e.g. producing oxygen, reducing smog, and intercepting airborne particulates), social welfare (e.g. reducing stress and promoting physical activity), the environment (e.g. filtering, slowing and retaining rainwater, and cooling air temperatures), and the economy (e.g. improving property values). And native trees are especially important because they are adapted to local climates and soils, coevolved with the flora and fauna of the region, and are intricately tied to the function of ecosystems and the maintenance of biodiversity.

Tree roots extend well beyond the visible canopy of the tree and can be greatly impacted by disturbances to the ground around them (e.g., from compaction, grading, paving, etc.). Healthy roots that have access to nutrients, air, and water are vital to maintaining the health of the tree. For this reason, no disturbance is allowed within the tree protected zone, which is defined as 15 feet from the dripline of the mature native tree.



#### SPECIES OF SPECIAL CONCERN:

CDFW uses this status for rare and sensitive animals not listed under FESA or CESA, but which nonetheless are declining at a rate that could result in listing, as well as for animals that historically occurred in low numbers that have known threats to their continued presence. More information on Species of Special Concern can be found on the CDFW website at <https://www.wildlife.ca.gov/Conservation/SSC>. For the purposes of the SEA Program, both Species of Special Concern and their occupied habitat are Category 2 SEA Resources.

Since animals move and generally flee or hide when biological surveys are underway, determination of an animal species' presence cannot rely on direct sightings of the species. Therefore, even if the animal itself has not been directly observed on the project site, its presence or use of an area may be determined by the presence of special habitat features such as nests, dens, burrows, and roosts. The SEA Ordinance prohibits disturbance of any such habitat features that have been identified by a qualified biologist as belonging to a special status species. If a special habitat feature indicates presence of a species of special concern, the consulting biologist should confer with CDFW to determine the appropriate buffer to maintain between the habitat feature and the proposed development, and this buffer should be shown on the BCM.

### SEA RESOURCE CATEGORY 3

This category includes natural communities considered by CDFW to be likely to become imperiled unless the circumstances that are threatening their survival improve. Resources in this category include the following:



#### VULNERABLE NATURAL COMMUNITIES (G3/S3):

Natural communities with a global rank of G3 or a state rank of S3 are considered “vulnerable”. Vulnerable communities are at moderate risk of extinction or elimination due to restricted range, relatively few populations (21-80 viable occurrences remaining worldwide or statewide and/or from 2,000 to 50,000 hectares remaining), recent and widespread declines, or other factors.

The SEA Ordinance includes provisions for two tiers of impact to vulnerable natural communities, namely disturbances under 500 square feet and disturbances over 500 square feet.

1. Development not exceeding 500 square feet of disturbance to SEA Resource Category 3 is required to preserve an equal area of the same SEA Resource(s) elsewhere on the project site (1:1 preservation ratio).
2. Developments that exceeds 500 square feet of impact to SEA Resource Category 3 are required to preserve an area of the same SEA Resource(s) at least two-times the size of that impacted (2:1 preservation ratio).

For both tiers, all other development standards must be met, including the maximum total building site area and required setback for native trees. Additionally, to meet the requirements of this development standard, the area to be preserved must:

1. consist of the same type of SEA Resource(s) as that being disturbed,
2. be located outside of the development footprint of the proposed project,
3. be located outside of any existing brush clearance zones of neighboring structures, and
4. be recorded through a permanent on-site deed restriction or covenant (see Chapter 7).

### SEA RESOURCE CATEGORY 4

This category represents the more common natural communities that occur within the County, as well as certain plant species with limited distribution within the state.



#### APPARENTLY SECURE NATURAL COMMUNITIES (G4/S4):

Natural communities with a global rank of G4 or a state rank of S4 are considered to be “apparently secure” within their range. Apparently secure communities may be uncommon within a given geographic range, but they are not rare on a larger scale. Some cause for long-term concern for these communities due to declines and other factors may be warranted regionally. G4/S4 natural communities are defined as having from 81-300 viable

occurrences worldwide or statewide, and/or more than 50,000 to 200,000 hectares remaining.



#### SECURE NATURAL COMMUNITIES (G5/S5):

Natural communities with a global rank of G5 or a state rank of S5 are considered to be “secure” within their range. These are the most common, widespread, and abundant natural communities, and are demonstrably secure due to worldwide and statewide abundance.

The SEA Ordinance allows for up to 500 square feet of disturbance to these natural communities without requiring preservation. However, projects proposing to disturb more than 500 square feet are required to preserve an area at least equal in size to that which is being disturbed.

To meet the requirements of the development standard for disturbance over 500 square feet, the area to be preserved must be:

1. the same type(s) of natural community as that being disturbed,
2. located outside of the development footprint of the proposed project,
3. located outside of any existing fuel modification/brush clearance zones of neighboring structures,
4. equal in size to the area of the disturbed natural community, and
5. recorded through a permanent on-site deed restriction or covenant (see Chapter 7 for open space preservation requirements).



#### CALIFORNIA RARE PLANT RANK 4:

RPR4 plants, as identified by the CNPS Rare Plant Program<sup>8</sup>, are basically the “watch list” plants. These plants are of limited distribution and may be locally significant. They warrant regular monitoring and may be transferred to a more protective rank by CNPS should the degree of endangerment or rarity change. This category includes both individual plants (especially woody, shrub species) and the habitat containing annual or herbaceous plants.

Similar to SEA Resource Category 4 Natural Communities, the SEA Ordinance allows for up to 500 square feet of disturbance to habitat containing RPR4 annual or herbaceous plants without preservation. It also allows for disturbance to up to 10 individual woody plants ranked RPR4 without preservation. If over 500 square feet of disturbance is being proposed, the applicant must preserve an area containing an equal amount of occupied habitat of the same RPR4 species. If more than 10 individual RPR4 woody plants are proposed to be disturbed, an area encompassing an equal number of individuals of the same species must be preserved as open space.

<sup>8</sup> Available online at <http://www.cnps.org/cnps/rareplants/>

## SEA RESOURCE CATEGORY 5

All biotic resources that are not included in one of the categories listed above but that nonetheless contribute to the biodiversity, ecosystem services, wildlife corridors, migration pathways, and preservation of the SEAs are included here. Examples of such resources include vegetation dominated by non-native species, agricultural fields, hedges, and non-native trees and shrubs. Although disturbed, such biological resources still contribute to the preservation of SEAs and often play a vital role in wildlife movement and the protection of SEA Resources listed in Categories 1 through 4. Since this category of SEA Resources is not as sensitive to the impacts of development as the other four categories, the SEA Ordinance does not include any development standards that relate directly to impacting SEA Resource Category 5.

## TOTAL BUILDING SITE AREA

In addition to meeting the requirements above for SEA Resource Categories 1 through 4, there is 20,000 square foot size limit for the total building site area. The building pad and all graded slopes, all structures, decks, patios, impervious surfaces, and parking areas must be included in the calculation of total building site area. Certain development activities associated with the building site, such as one access driveway (not to exceed 300 feet long and 20 feet wide) and activities (such as fuel modification) required to meet LA County Fire Department fire safety requirements, may be excluded from the calculation of the Total Building Site Area. However, these development activities are still counted as disturbances to SEA Resources and must comply with all development standards. For instance, the access driveway should avoid Priority Biological Resources<sup>9</sup>, provide preservation at the prescribed ratios for impacted SEA Resources, and abide by required setbacks for water resources and native trees. Vegetation removal or thinning for fuel modification also impacts SEA Resources, and therefore, must avoid any Category 1 SEA Resource and provide open space at the prescribed ratios for other SEA Resources Categories. Applicants wishing to avoid fuel modification in sensitive habitat areas should consult with the fire department to determine if a modified fuel modification plan that excludes certain SEA Resources may be approved.

SEA RESOURCE ALLOWED DISTURBANCE & REQUIRED PRESERVATION		
SEA RESOURCE CATEGORY	ALLOWED DISTURBANCE AREA*	REQUIRED OPEN SPACE PRESERVATION
1	0	N/A
2	≤500 SF	2X Disturbed Area
3	≤500 SF	1X Disturbed Area
	>500 SF	2X Disturbed Area
4	≤500 SF	None
	>500 SF	1X Disturbed Area

\* The total building site area shall be less than or equal to 20,000 square feet.

<sup>9</sup> SEA Resource Categories 1, 2, and 3 are considered Priority Biological Resources.

## WATER RESOURCES

The definition of SEA Resource Category 1 includes water resources, and therefore, no amount of direct disturbance to water resources is allowed within SEAs. Furthermore, since water resources are highly vulnerable to changes that occur within their watersheds and especially to activities that occur around their edges, all development, including fuel modification, is required to be set back a minimum distance from water resources (see table below). Any proposed disturbance directly to the water resource or occurring within the required setbacks will require an SEA CUP.

In the SEA Program, the term water resource is used to identify all forms of surface water protected by the SEA Ordinance and may differ from the definitions used by other agencies. The various types of water resources referenced in the SEA Ordinance include lakes, reservoirs, ponds, rivers, streams, marshes, springs, vernal pools, and playas (see Glossary for definitions of each type of water resource). For the purpose of the SEA Ordinance, all water resources within SEAs are protected even in instances where the resource was initially created artificially by human activities. Similarly, ephemeral and intermittent water resources are protected in equal measure to perennial water resources.

It is important to note that many water resources are also regulated by state and federal resource management agencies, including the US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB), and CDFW. Depending on the location and activity being proposed, it may also trigger permit requirements through these state or federal agencies. A jurisdictional waters delineation may be needed to determine if proposed activities fall within the jurisdiction of any such agencies. The applicant should consult directly with the appropriate agency if their project is determined to fall within its jurisdiction.

WATER RESOURCES REQUIRED SETBACKS*			
WATER RESOURCE	SIZE	REQUIRED SETBACK	MEASURED FROM**
Lakes, reservoirs, ponds	Any size	150 ft or the watershed boundary, whichever is greater	High water mark.
Marshes, seeps, springs	<0.5 acre	100 ft	Edge of saturated soil.
	0.5 – 1 acre	150 ft	
	>1 acre	300 ft when greater than 1 acre	
Vernal pools, playas	Any size	150 ft or the watershed boundary, whichever is greater	Maximum pool extent.

Rivers and streams with riparian vegetation	< 50 ft wide during or immediately following a 10-yr storm	100 ft	Outside edge of riparian vegetation (i.e. dripline) on either side of the active stream channel. If riparian vegetation is absent or sparse, use bed and bank of the active channel inclusive of any braided channel conditions.
	50-100 ft wide during or immediately following a 10-yr storm	150 ft	
	>100 ft wide during or immediately following a 10-yr storm	300 ft	

\* All setbacks should be measured horizontally, in plan view, since they are intended to serve as spatial buffers. For SEA CUPs, a lesser setback may be considered if topography and/or other physical features in combination with best management practices are determined to provide adequate screening and buffering.

\*\*All delineations should follow the methodology described in the 1987 Corps of Engineers Wetland Delineation Manual.

## AREA-WIDE DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS

The following development standards apply to all projects within SEAs. The primary purpose of these development standards is to ensure the preservation natural habitat and wildlife movement opportunities within SEAs.

### 1. IMPERMEABLE FENCING, WALLS, ENCLOSURES, AND SIGNAGE

Fencing within SEAs is generally discouraged, as fences can create hazards and barriers for wildlife movement, seasonal migrations, and access to food and water. When used, fencing should be designed and sited in such a way as to not restrict wildlife movement within the SEA.

Wildlife impermeable fencing is fencing that prevents or creates a barrier for the passage of wildlife from one side to the other. In SEAs, impermeable fencing, walls, and enclosures are only allowed within the development footprint, and should only be used around the immediate vicinity of residences and associated yards, for the control and safety of domestic animals, and where public health and safety dictates their use. Impermeable fencing, walls, or enclosures should never be constructed around areas that contain natural habitat, except where temporary exclusion fencing is needed to keep wildlife away from habitat restoration areas while they become established.

#### A FENCE MAY BE PROBLEMATIC FOR WILDLIFE IF...

- it is too high to jump over
- it is too low to crawl under
- it is too wide and creates a 3-dimensional obstacle
- there are loose or broken wires
- its wires or boards are spaced too closely together
- it has elements that can impale or snag a leaping or flying animal
- it is not readily visible to running animals or flying birds



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## 2. PERMEABLE FENCING

Wildlife permeable fencing may be utilized elsewhere on the property to delineate property lines or to section off development features. A wildlife permeable fence is one that incorporates, at minimum, the following principles:

- ❖ Wildlife should be able to easily see all fence posts and horizontal elements. Materials that are visible to wildlife include wooden rails, steel pipes, vinyl rails, PVC pipes, recycled plastic rails, coated wires, or smooth wires covered with PVC or clearly marked with flagging.
- ❖ The top edge of the uppermost horizontal elements shall be no more than 42 inches above ground level to allow wildlife to jump over the fence.
- ❖ The bottom edge of the lowest horizontal elements shall be no lower than 18 inches above ground level to allow wildlife to pass under the fence.

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## 3. FENCING MATERIALS

Never construct or top fences, gates, and walls with spikes, glass, razors, nets, or other such materials that may be harmful to wildlife. To prevent the entrapment of birds, fence and signposts should not be hollow at the top or have unfilled bolt holes. Wildlife friendly fences are those constructed of materials that are readily visible to wildlife, preventing unfortunate accidents such as collisions, entanglement, entrapment, or impaling of unsuspecting animals. Barbed wire may be used on the interior horizontal elements of the fence, but may not be used as the top- or bottom-most elements.

SINCE FENCES CAN POSE SERIOUS PROBLEMS FOR WILDLIFE IN WAYS THAT WE DO NOT ALWAYS SEE, ALTERNATIVE DESIGN FEATURES THAT COULD SERVE THE SAME PURPOSE SHOULD BE CONSIDERED. BARRIERS OR DESIGNS USING NATURAL MATERIALS ARE OFTEN MORE EFFECTIVE THAN FENCES AT PREVENTING ACCESS OR PROVIDING PRIVACY, WHILE SIMULTANEOUSLY PROVIDING A MORE NATURAL APPEARANCE AND MINIMIZING MAINTENANCE REQUIREMENTS. CLOSELY SPACED NATURAL VEGETATION (E.G. HEDGES) CAN SERVE AS A PRIVACY FENCE, FOR EXAMPLE, OR A ROW OF TREES OR BOULDERS CAN SERVE AS A BOUNDARY MARKER.

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#### 4. WINDOW REFLECTIVITY

Windows can be a big problem for birds. A 2014 study published by the American Ornithological Society found that between 365 and 988 million birds are killed each year in the United States by building collisions<sup>10</sup>. Reflective windows, sometimes in combination with artificial outdoor lighting, are the major cause of such collisions. The vast majority of structures that birds collide with are residences and low-rise buildings. A single home may kill a dozen or more birds each year without the owner being aware. Birds typically collide with windows because they see the reflection of surrounding habitat and fly full-speed into it. Even if the initial impact does not kill the bird immediately, it may hemorrhage after flying away from the site or be left injured and vulnerable to predation.

The Ordinance requires that all windows in SEAs be comprised of non-glare/non-reflective glass. The Cornell Lab of Ornithology, Audubon Society, the American Bird Conservancy, and many other bird conservation organizations offer a range of strategies for preventing birds from colliding with windows that applicants may wish to explore and integrate into their project design to make more bird friendly projects.

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#### 5. OUTDOOR LIGHTING

Outdoor lighting that is directed toward natural habitat or into the night sky can be disruptive to natural animal behavior. Lighting the night sky can disrupt bird migration and nocturnal foraging by bats and birds, while lighting terrestrial habitat areas can disturb foraging patterns of other nocturnal animals. Part 9 of Chapter 22.44 creates a Rural Outdoor Lighting District, which is a supplemental district that encompasses rural areas of the County and “promotes and maintains dark skies for the health and enjoyment of individuals and wildlife.” The majority of SEAs are already included in the Rural Outdoor Lighting District, and the current SEA Ordinance essentially expands the district to include any parts of SEAs that were not originally covered by the supplemental district, by requiring those areas to abide by the same standards.

Applicants can meet this development standard and protect habitat and dark skies by following these general guidelines for outside lighting:

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<sup>10</sup> Loss, Scott R., Tom Will, Sara S. Loss, and Peter P. Marra. 2014. Bird–building collisions in the United States: Estimates of annual mortality and species vulnerability. *The Condor* 116(1):8-23. <https://doi.org/10.1650/CONDOR-13-090.1>

**Keep it LOW**

- ✓ Mount your light fixtures as low as possible to minimize light trespass (see Part 9 of Chapter 22.44 for specific height requirements by use).
- ✓ Use the lowest amount of light needed for the task. Consider using motion sensors to avoid steady-burning lights, or timers to ensure that lights aren't left on longer than necessary.

**Keep it SHIELDED**

- ✓ Use fixtures that are shielded so that the bulbs and/or glowing lenses are not visible, minimizing light trespass into natural habitat areas or skywards.

**Keep it WARM**

- ✓ Use only warm light sources for outdoor lighting. Blue light is now known to brighten the night sky more than any other color of light, so minimizing the amount of blue light emitted is important. Exposure to blue light at night has been shown to harm human health and endanger wildlife. Warm light sources recommended for use outdoors include LPS, HPS and low-color-temperature LEDs.

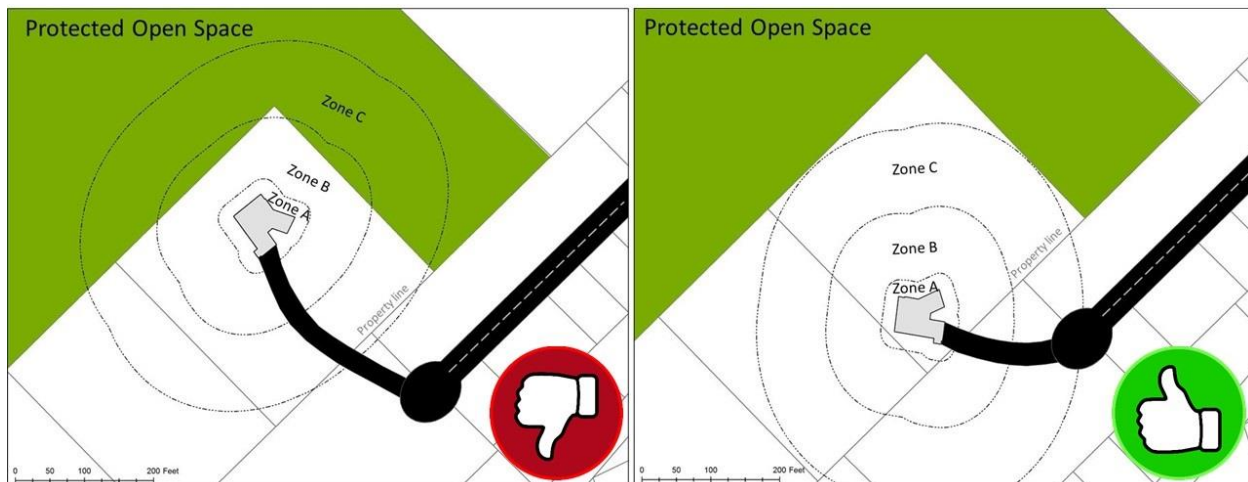
Per Section 22.44.530, the following types of outdoor lighting are prohibited: drop-down lenses, mercury vapor lights, ultraviolet lights, and searchlights, laser lights, or other outdoor lighting that flashes, blinks, alternates, or moves.

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**6. OPEN SPACE BUFFER**

In order to minimize fuel modification, brush clearance, or other vegetation disturbing activities within protected open space (i.e. state or county park, conservation easement, open space deed restriction, etc.), the SEA Ordinance requires that all new habitable structures be set back a minimum of 200 feet from the boundary of any such lands. A 200-foot buffer is the standard distance required by the LA County Fire Department for fuel modification and brush clearance to protect a habitable structure. If the Fire Department approves a fuel modification plan with non-standard distances for fuel modification zones A, B, and/or C, the setback for habitable structures from open space should be based on those approved in the Fire Department approved fuel modification plan. Department Staff can assist in identifying protected open space in the project vicinity.

Additionally, since dedication of open space will be a requirement for many projects within SEAs, it is important to remember that this requirement will also apply to those proposed open space areas. Any open space proposed for dedication in association with the development must be located at least 200-feet from any existing or proposed structure.



## 7. LANDSCAPING

The SEA Ordinance prohibits the use of invasive species within SEAs, including any horticultural plant species listed in Appendix C of this Guide or any other plant that is listed as invasive by the California Invasive Plant Council<sup>11</sup>. The majority of species listed in Appendix C are plants that were originally introduced to the region for horticultural purposes or erosion control that have demonstrated an ability to escape from cultivation and spread into natural ecosystems, developing self-sustaining populations and becoming dominant or disruptive to those ecosystems. Given the impacts that invasive plants can have on native species, the prevention of new introductions of invasive plants into SEAs is vital to the preservation of biodiversity and ecosystem services.

All landscaping activities occurring within SEAs should employ current best practices (such as drought tolerant design and use of indigenous species) to the greatest extent possible, avoid unnecessary direct impacts to habitat, utilize low impact design principles, and conform to legal standards for all pesticide, herbicide, and fertilizer applications.

## 8. OPEN SPACE

Any required open space preservation areas as described above must be located outside of the development footprint. The open space area should not include any existing or proposed driveways, streets, roads, or highways.

<sup>11</sup> <http://www.cal-ipc.org/>

## LAND USE SPECIFIC DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS

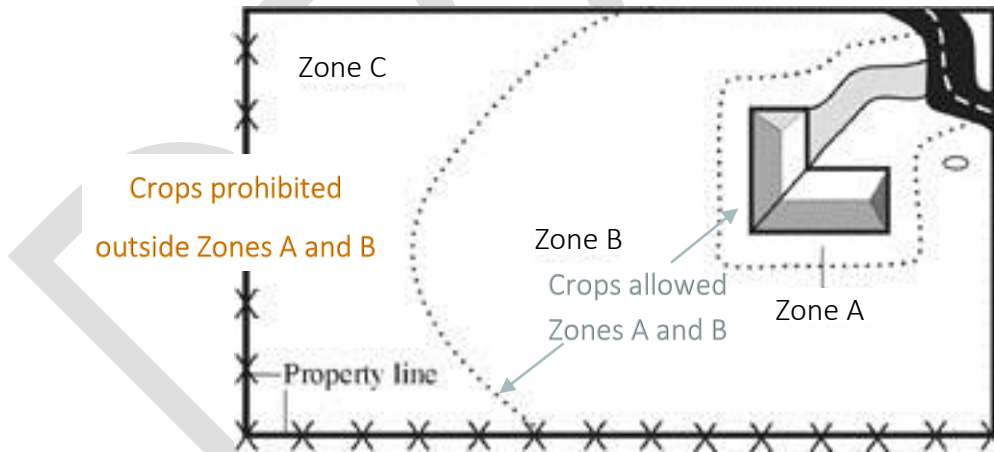
The following development standards relate to specific types of land use.

### 1. CROPS

Within zoning and land use areas that permit their use, crops may be planted within the required irrigated fuel modification of a permitted development. The irrigated fuel modification zones include zones A and B, which typically extend out to 100 feet from permitted structures. New crops proposed as a primary use outside of an irrigated fuel modification zone require an SEA CUP, except in the Antelope Valley where they occur on previously disturbed farmland as defined by Section 22.102.020 (see Chapter 4 for more information on this exemption).

The use of invasive species within SEAs is prohibited; this includes crop species listed in Appendix C of this Guide or considered invasive by the California Invasive Plant Council<sup>12</sup>. Invasive plants are defined as plants that are not native to a region or ecosystem that, once introduced, tend to spread aggressively, disrupting native species occurring in the area, and even changing ecosystem processes such as hydrology, fire regimes, and soil chemistry.

All agricultural activities occurring within SEAs should also employ current best management practices (BMPs) recognized in the industry, avoid unnecessary direct impacts to natural habitat, utilize low impact design principles, and conform to legal standards for all pesticide, herbicide, and fertilizer applications.



### 2. EXPLORATORY TESTING

- a. Permitted use: Exploratory testing and geotechnical investigations are often a necessary step in the project design process that provide necessary information for completing detailed engineering and architectural designs of access roads, bridges, septic systems, and structures. However, these activities can also cause a great deal of disturbance to the landscape. For this reason, exploratory

<sup>12</sup> <http://www.cal-ipc.org/>

testing, in and of itself, within SEAs is considered a permitted use, and requires an application for SEA Review. All exploratory testing must comply with the following practices:

- i. Utilize existing roads and previously graded or disturbed areas wherever feasible. If the area occurs away from existing roads and previously graded or disturbed areas, the use of track mounted vehicles is required in order to create the least amount of impact to the vegetation possible.
  - ii. If it is necessary to remove vegetation in order to provide access for the testing equipment, plants should be selectively cut above the soil, and soil left intact so that seeds and roots that are already present in the soil may resprout and revegetate the area naturally after testing is complete.
  - iii. Development exempt from the SEA Ordinance is also exempt from this development standard. However, such development is encouraged to follow practices described herein to reduce impact to SEA Resources and protect the aesthetic qualities of the property being tested.
- b. Exploratory Testing Stabilization: Any areas disturbed by exploratory testing are likely to be vulnerable to soil erosion and invasion by nonnative, invasive plants. For this reason, the SEA Ordinance requires that immediate action be taken to stabilize soils and reestablish native vegetative cover following the disturbance event. Such actions may consist of installation of temporary erosion control measures and application of seed from locally indigenous plants. These temporary stabilization activities must be implemented within 90 days of completing or terminating the exploratory testing.
- c. Exploratory Testing Restoration: Based on the results of the exploratory testing, the project will either move forward with development of site plans and submittal of a land use application, or any area disturbed by exploratory testing will be required to be returned to its natural state, in accordance with a Department approved restoration or enhancement plan. Applications submitted within one year following exploratory testing activities must include provisions to stabilize all disturbed soil within the proposed development footprint and to restore any areas outside of the proposed development footprint to their natural condition. Site plans should show exploratory testing restoration areas, and a restoration or enhancement plan should be included with the application materials.

For any disturbance to natural areas caused by exploratory testing that is not followed by a land use application within one year, as well as for applications that are subsequently withdrawn by the applicant or denied by the Commission or Board, full restoration of the disturbed area is required. In such circumstances, a restoration or enhancement plan should be submitted to the Department prior to beginning restoration activities to ensure that the proposed approach will be acceptable

to the Director. See Chapter 6 of this Guide for what to include in the restoration plan and Chapter 7 for guidance on conducting habitat restoration in SEAs.

Restoration of natural areas impacted by exploratory testing that are outside of the proposed development footprint of a pending or approved land use application must begin within one year of the disturbance.

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### 3. LAND DIVISIONS

Land divisions have a high degree of potential to negatively affect SEA Resources, interrupt wildlife corridors, and create habitat fragmentation. Yet a great deal of opportunity also exists for land divisions to result in long-term preservation of previously unprotected SEA Resources, wildlife corridors, and ecosystem services. Since land divisions within the SEA typically concern large areas of undeveloped land, the opportunities for both resource disturbance and resource protection are great.

The SEA Ordinance encourages land division projects to focus on configurations and designs that result in the least amount of disturbance to SEA Resources and impact on wildlife movement by requiring development to be grouped in a single area and restricting it to 25% or less of the project site. To the maximum extent feasible, development areas should be sited in the location that is overall least impactful to SEA functions and values.

Land divisions should be designed as follows:

- ✓ With the lowest amount of interface between development and preserved areas (also known as the lowest perimeter to area ratio). A shorter perimeter will translate to less potential for edge effects to degrade the open space.
- ✓ The shape, size, and location of the area to be preserved as open space should create the maximum amount of habitat connectivity between on and off-site natural areas, preserve wildlife movement, and maximize the amount of resources available for resident wildlife.

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### 4. LARGE LOT PARCEL MAP

The Large Lot Parcel Map Development Standard will allow for a “big picture” SEA Review of Large Lot Parcel Map subdivision projects. The process will allow for the potential of large contiguous parcels of sensitive habitats to remain intact, while also providing that individual parcels have a reasonable opportunity to undergo an SEA Review (per 22.102.060) for future proposed development.

At the Large Lot Parcel Map phase, each parcel created by the subdivision must have at least 20,000 square feet of Category 4 and/or 5 habitat where a potential future development could occur. The potential developable area should be located a minimum of 200 feet (to account for fuel modification) from the required setback(s) from water resources (see Water Resources Development Standard section above). Any Category 4 habitat beyond 500 square feet located in the potential developable area should be matched elsewhere on the same parcel by an equivalent or greater area of Category 4 habitat.

Large Lot Parcel Map subdivision projects will be required to submit an Informational Exhibit and a BCM. The Informational Exhibit should consist of materials that show development feasibility on the proposed lots. The BCM for a Large Lot Parcel Map subdivision project can be based solely on a desktop analysis of the area using the best available data and most recent aerial imagery available. No field surveys are required at this stage, although field verification of SEA Resource Categories may be warranted in some circumstances.

If, due to biological constraints, certain lots within the Large Lot Parcel Map subdivision are determined to lack a reasonable potential for future development meeting development standards, the applicant may choose to dedicate those highly constrained lots for open space or conservation. A map condition reflecting such open space or conservation dedication of the undevelopable constrained lots to a public or authorized private conservancy will be added, and the project may proceed with SEA Review per 22.102.060.

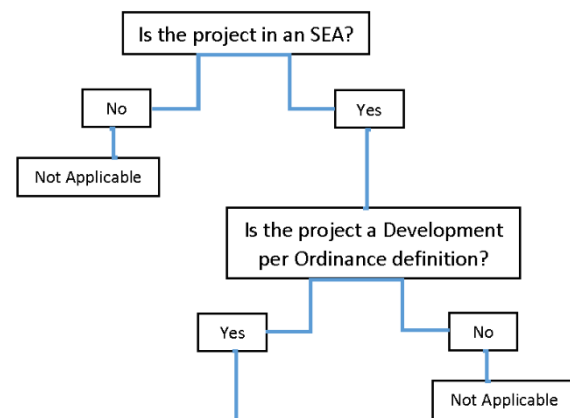
## CHAPTER 4. PERMIT ANALYSIS

Chapter 2 of this Implementation Guide provided an overview of the SEA assessment process. Chapter 4 will discuss the requirements of each step of the SEA assessment process and provide guidance to Case Planners on how to analyze projects that require an SEA Review or SEA CUP. It is recommended that the applicant find out whether the SEA regulations apply to their project as early as possible in the project design process, as a project may require revisions during the review process.

### SEA ORDINANCE APPLICABILITY

Project applications submitted after the effective date of the SEA Ordinance will be subject to this Ordinance. Pending projects whose applications have been deemed complete prior to the adoption of the SEA Ordinance can choose to be subject to the previous SEA Ordinance or this Ordinance.

All areas designated in the General Plan and related maps as SEA within unincorporated LA County are subject to this Ordinance. This information can be found on DRP's online GIS application (Layer: SEA) and the Significant Ecological Areas and Coastal Resources Areas Policy Map (Figure 9.3 of the General Plan).

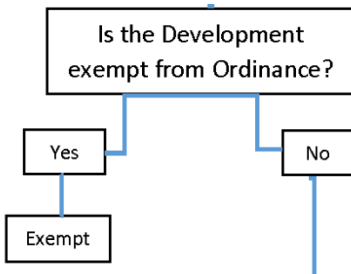


Exceptions to this applicability include the Santa Monica Mountains (SMM) and Santa Catalina Island SEAs. The SMM North Area (SMMNA) Community Standards District (CSD) boundaries encompass the majority of the Santa Monica Mountains SEA. Since these areas so closely overlap, and since the SMMNA Plan was being updated concurrently with the SEA Ordinance and would incorporate similar measures for protecting SEA Resources, it was determined that development within areas of the SMM SEA that are also within the boundaries of the SMMNA Plan should continue to be regulated by the previous version of the SEA Ordinance, until such time that the SMMNA Plan becomes effective. Once the SMMNA Plan becomes effective, development within its SEAs will be regulated by the SMMNA Plan alone. Projects in the Santa Monica Mountains Coastal Zone, which is a CRA, are not subject to this Ordinance or the SMMNA Plan, but rather are governed by the SMM Local Coastal Program, which provides more specific and protective regulations of SEA Resources in the Santa Monica Mountains Coastal Zone. For Santa Catalina Island SEA, the SEA boundaries will remain as mapped in the Santa Catalina Island Local Coastal Program, and development in those areas will continue to be regulated through the version of the SEA Ordinance that was in effect at the time of certification of that LCP. The Santa Catalina Islands LCP will have to be amended and certified by the California Coastal Commission for this Ordinance to apply.

Another potential exception to the applicability of this ordinance could occur where there is are provisions for a zone, supplemental district (e.g. Community Standards Districts, etc.), or elsewhere in Title 22 that also regulates development within the SEA. In such instances, the Case Planner shall apply the regulations that are more protective of the biological resources.

## EXEMPTIONS

Section 22.102.040 of the Zoning Code lists specific exemptions when projects are not subject to the SEA Ordinance.



### IN THE ANTELOPE VALLEY (AV):

A. Projects within the boundaries of the AV Area Plan and proposing construction of new single-family residences (SFR), associated landscaping, new accessory structures, additions to existing accessory structures, or new or expanded animal keeping areas and facilities for personal use are exempt from the SEA Ordinance. The boundaries of the AV Area Plan can be found using DRP's online GIS application.

Non-grazing farmland mapped in the State of California Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program, that has been inactive for a period of less than three consecutive years, and is located within the boundaries of the AV Area Plan, is exempt from the SEA Ordinance. Information on the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program can be found on the State of California Department of Conservation, Division of Land Resource Protection. The data for this Program is updated every two years, with 2017 data being the most recent year published at the time of Ordinance effective date.

These exemptions for development within the boundaries of the Antelope Valley Area Plan are expressly required per a Board of Supervisors motion from November 12, 2014.

### OUTSIDE OF THE ANTELOPE VALLEY:

- B. In all other areas, projects proposing additions or modifications to existing SFRs, or proposing associated accessory structures or animal keeping areas and facilities for personal use are exempt from the SEA Ordinance only if the development:
  - a. Does not increase the total building site area to more than 20,000 square feet; and
  - b. Does not encroach more than 10% into the driplines of up to four SEA Native Trees. Note that although exempt from the SEA Ordinance, the development may still be subject to the County's Oak Tree Ordinance if encroaching into the protected zones of any regulation sized oak trees.

### IN ALL AREAS:

- C. Development of one animal keeping structure within 100 feet of the primary use is exempt. The animal keeping structure may not exceed 120 square feet. If the applicant is proposing more than one animal keeping structure or any additional development, if the animal keeping structure is larger than 120 square feet, or if any part of the proposed animal keeping structure is more than 100 feet from the primary use, it is subject to this Ordinance.
- D. SEA CUPs and other valid use permits previously reviewed for impacts to SEA Resources that require a Revised Exhibit "A" for maintenance, minor additions, or changes (not to exceed 10% of the approved project) may be exempt from this Ordinance if:

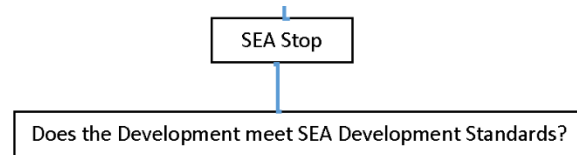
- a. Additions or changes do not expand the previously approved development footprint, or
  - b. Maintenance, additions, or changes are operating under a valid use permit and found to be in substantial compliance with such permit.
- E. CUPs that are expired and in need of renewal of land use entitlements may be exempt from this Ordinance if the proposed project scope does not expand the previously approved development footprint and if impacts to SEA Resources were reviewed under the prior permit(s). Expired SEA CUPs applying for a renewal are exempt as long as the project is not proposing extensive improvements or modifications.
- F. Some existing development that is within SEAs today was outside of the SEA boundaries at the time of approval, and therefore was not subject to the previous SEA Ordinance. The General Plan 2035 expanded the SEA boundaries in 2015. Such development will be exempt when renewing the land use entitlements, as long as the proposed project does not expand the previously approved development footprint and if impacts to SEA Resources were reviewed under the prior permit(s). An example of adequate review of impacts to SEA Resources would be the completion of a Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND) meeting CEQA requirements, reviewed by the Department Biologist, and having a mitigation monitoring and reporting program.
- G. Development that is under an adopted Specific Plan may be exempt from this Ordinance as long as it can be demonstrated that the project received adequate review of the impacts to SEA Resources. Some Specific Plans incorporate a comprehensive analysis of the SEAs within the Plan area. Projects that are regulated by these Specific Plans may be able to prove that impacts to SEAs were adequately analyzed by the Specific Plan and therefore exempt from this Ordinance. However, not all Specific Plans include a detailed analysis of SEA Resources and may defer to the SEA Ordinance. The County Biologist should be consulted when determining whether an adequate level of analysis of biological impacts was conducted through the Specific Plan.
- H. Rebuilding and replacement of damaged legal structures that will not increase the existing development footprint are exempt from the SEA Ordinance. Check historical case files to determine that the structures were legally established.
- I. Land divisions for the purposes of the Land Conservation Act/Williamson Act are exempt from the SEA Ordinance. Under the Land Conservation Act, also known as the Williamson Act, local governments can enter into voluntary contracts with private landowners for the purpose of restricting specified lands to agricultural or open space uses for defined periods of time. With the new land use designation under the Land Conservation Act, the property tax is assessed at a lower rate since the use of the land is now farming and open space opposed to the full market value of the previous use.
- J. Fire protection through fuel modification and brush clearance for existing structures is exempt from the SEA Ordinance. The applicant will need to submit a fuel modification plan approved by the Fire Department.

- K. Previously approved surface mining permits and reclamation plans are exempt from the SEA Ordinance if the grant term of the permit is still valid. If the surface mining project applies for a periodic review required per Section 22.56.1410 and conditions of approval, it is exempt from the SEA Ordinance only if the periodic review does not include proposed changes that will expand the development footprint and must be consistent with a valid surface mining permit.
- L. Maintenance of existing legally established driveways, streets, and highways is exempt from this Ordinance. Maintenance encompasses activities that do not extend beyond the previously disturbed footprint and occur exclusively within the established right of way, such as filling potholes, crack sealing, chip sealing, slurry seal, patching, and resurfacing. It does not include such things as road-widening, rerouting, or replacing washed out culverts or bridges.
- M. If a development's only impact is related to native trees that were previously planted to meet requirements of the Tree Planting Ordinance (§22.52.2100) or other similar requirements of Title 21 or 22, the project is exempt from this Ordinance. Trees planted to meet Tree Planting Ordinance requirements are typically planted within close proximity to development, such as within parking lots and close to buildings, and encroachment into their driplines for regular maintenance and repairs of facilities is expected. Requiring SEA analysis for impacts to these trees alone will not be required. This exemption does not apply to native trees planted as required mitigation. Note that if the tree(s) being impacted is an oak species, the Oak Tree Ordinance may still apply depending on the size of the tree.
- N. Emergency removals of SEA Native Trees are exempt from this Ordinance if the reason for the removal is due to a hazardous or dangerous condition, such as trees damaged or destroyed by flood, fire, wind, drought, pests, or disease and posing a significant threat to people, structures, or other trees. A Forester from the Fire Department or a County Biologist must make the determination for the emergency removal based on a visual inspection. At the discretion of the Department, the visual inspection may take the form of a letter and photo documentation provided by a certified arborist, qualified natural resource professional, or licensed forester, or through a site visit by the County Forester or County Biologist.
- O. Tree maintenance that is needed for the continued health of an SEA Native Tree is exempt from the Ordinance as long as the maintenance is limited to removing dead wood and pruning of branches where it does not exceed 20% of the tree's overall canopy (per growing season). There are no submittal requirements; however, maintenance in excess of 20% of tree canopy or not done in accordance with guidelines published by the National Arborists Association is a violation of the Ordinance.

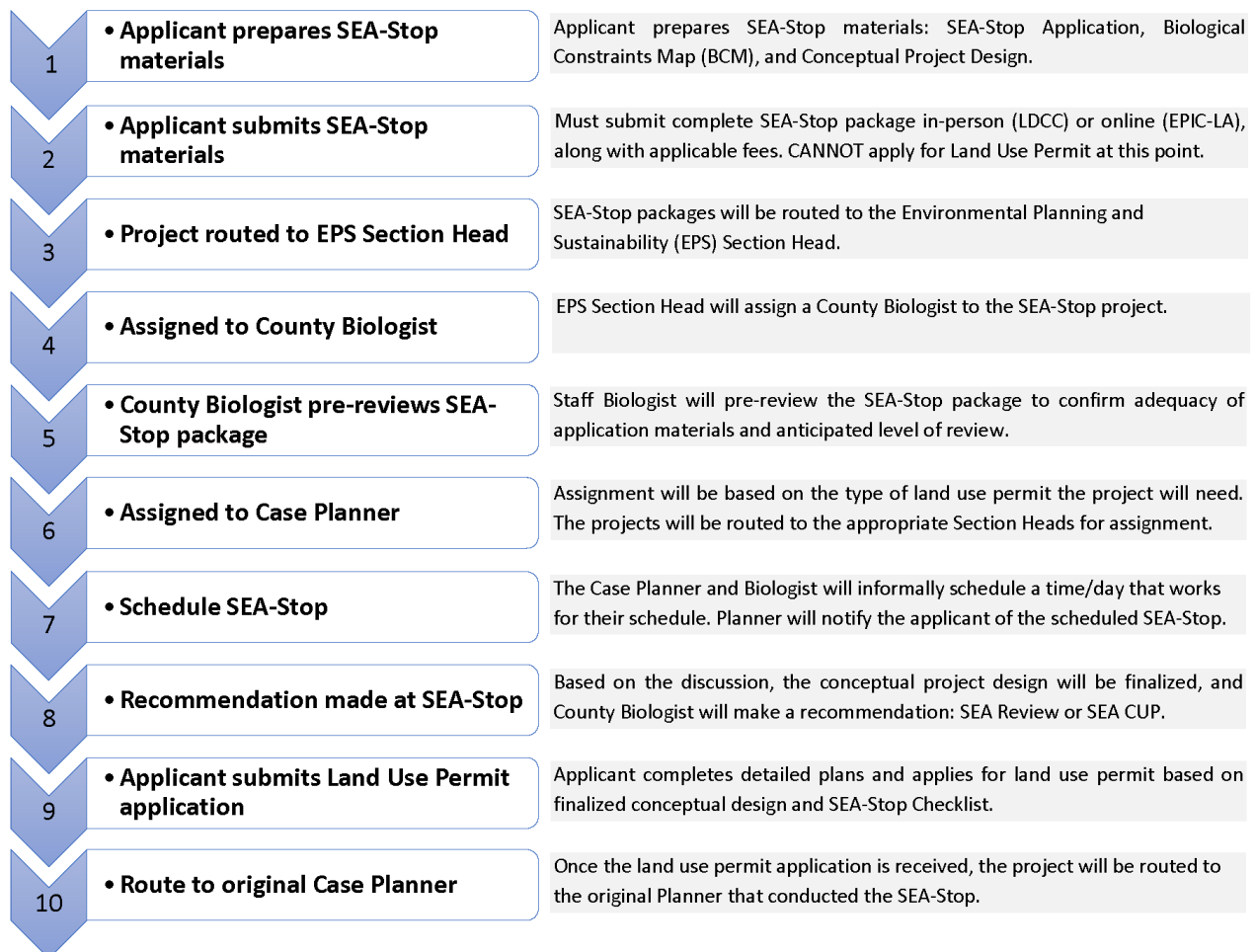
### SEA COUNSELING – THE “SEA-STOP”

The purpose of an SEA-Stop was previously discussed in Chapter 2. After confirming the applicability of the Ordinance and that no exemptions apply to the project, the applicant will submit, in-person to LDCC or online through EPIC-LA, the following required materials to schedule an SEA-Stop:

- ❖ SEA-Stop Application
- ❖ Biological Constraints Map
- ❖ Conceptual Project Design



The project will be assigned to an appropriate Case Planner and County Biologist based on the information provided in the SEA-Stop Application. An SEA-Stop meeting between the applicant, Case Planner, and County Biologist will be scheduled. The SEA-Stop may be combined with a One-Stop appointment for some projects. Below is a flowchart providing step-by-step guidance on SEA-Stop application procedures, including application intake, routing to the appropriate planner, and applying for a land use permit.



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## 1. SEA-STOP APPLICATION

For the SEA-Stop Application, the applicant will need to provide a sufficient project description. The information for the SEA-Stop Application should include, at minimum:

- ❖ Project name and address
- ❖ Assessor's Parcel Numbers (APNs)
- ❖ Size of parcel(s) – in acres
- ❖ Applicant name and contact information
- ❖ SEA name
- ❖ Consulting biologist name and contact information – Biologist must be on the SEATAC Certified Consultants List
- ❖ Date of Biological Survey
- ❖ Project Description – It is important that the applicant submit a detailed project description. The project description should include current and proposed uses. The more information we have about the project from the beginning, the better we can guide the applicant on how to design the project to minimize impacts to SEA Resources.

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## 2. BIOLOGICAL CONSTRAINTS MAP (BCM)

See Chapter 5 for specific information regarding the preparation of the BCM and required content.

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## 3. CONCEPTUAL PROJECT DESIGN

The Conceptual Project Design will allow the Case Planner and County Biologist to get an initial view of how the project may impact SEA Resources. The Conceptual Project Design can be shown directly on the BCM or separately as a Conceptual Site Plan. The Conceptual Project Design should depict the following:

- ❖ Graded areas
- ❖ Existing and proposed structure locations
- ❖ Fuel modification zone to 200-feet from all structures
- ❖ Utility access
- ❖ Driveways and parking areas
- ❖ Landscaped areas
- ❖ Exploratory testing locations

The purpose of the Conceptual Project Design is to guide project design to avoid or limit impact to SEA Resources. A Conceptual Project Design should not be as detailed as complete site plans for land use permit application submittal with engineering drawings. It should allow for flexibility and redesign based on the discussion at the SEA-Stop.

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## SEA-STOP ANALYSIS

After ensuring that the SEA-Stop application is complete, the Case Planner and County Biologist will analyze the Project Description, BCM, and Conceptual Project Design using the SEA-Stop Checklist, found in Appendix D. The Case Planner and County Biologist will analyze the project at the SEA-Stop to recommend an SEA assessment type: SEA Review or SEA CUP. For a ministerial SEA Review, the project will need a development footprint of no more than 20,000 square feet, meet all development standards in the SEA Ordinance, and provide adequate on-site open space preservation to compensate for impacts to SEA Resources. Projects that are unable to meet the requirements for an SEA Review will be recommended for an SEA CUP, which is a discretionary review process.

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## DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS

The SEA Ordinance Development Standards are organized under the following topics: SEA Resources, Water Resources, Area-Wide Development Standards, and Land Use Specific Development Standards. Refer to Chapter 3 for more information on the development standards and design guidelines.

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## VEGETATION REMOVAL AND OPEN SPACE PRESERVATION

The development standards allow for a certain amount of SEA Resources to be disturbed but also require onsite preservation of open space at certain ratios to compensate for the disturbed resources. The Vegetation Removal Worksheet (Appendix D) will be used during the SEA-Stop to review the proposed vegetation removal and preservation ratios.

The Vegetation Removal Worksheet will quantify the proposed disturbances and open space preservation for each SEA Resource Category.

Amount to be Disturbed:	Remaining available to preserve:	Preservation Ratio
sq ft	sq ft	<i>(area preserved: area disturbed)</i>

The County Biologist will compare the proposed numbers to the thresholds and ratios detailed in the SEA Resources section of the Development Standards in the Ordinance. Projects that meet these thresholds and ratios may be recommended for an SEA Review. Projects that do not meet the requirements will be recommended for an SEA CUP. Refer to Chapter 7 for more information on Open Space preservation and the appropriate mechanisms.

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## AFTER SEA-STOP

A copy of the completed SEA-Stop Checklist along with a signed and date stamped copy of the SEA-Stop Application<sup>13</sup> will be given to the applicant to submit along with the application package to the LDCC during Land Use Permit case intake. This checklist will indicate the SEA-Stop recommendation made by the Case Planner and County Biologist.

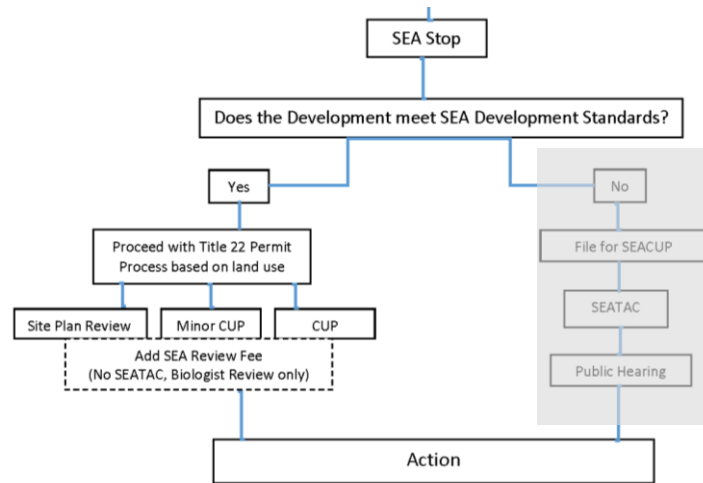
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<sup>13</sup> Including the BCM and Conceptual Project Design assessed at the SEA-Stop.

## SEA REVIEW

### PROCESSING SEA REVIEW

Projects recommended for SEA Review at the conclusion of the SEA-Stop will apply for the appropriate land use permit based on the proposed use. The SEA Review will be charged as an additional fee that covers the County Biologist's review. There will not be a separate approval for the SEA Review, unless the development does not require a use permit, in which case the SEA Review will be processed as a site plan review.



The application materials required for SEA Review are found in Section 22.106.060(D). They include a site plan<sup>14</sup>, a biological constraints map, and open space recordation documentation. To meet the open space recordation documentation requirement, the applicant should submit a draft version of the deed restriction or covenant with the application for Department review. After Staff has reviewed and agreed that the document and area to be preserved satisfy the requirements of the SEA Ordinance, the open space may be recorded, and the final recordation documentation submitted to the Department in order to receive the stamped plans.

The County Biologist will make the following determinations:

- ❖ Project meets all relevant Development Standards, and
- ❖ the required amount of on-site preserved open space is provided.

The SEA Review will be reviewed concurrently with the processing of the land use permit. The SEA Review will be approved as part of the land use permit final approval.

### SEA REVIEW ANALYSIS

When the Case Planner first receives the land use application package, the planner must confirm that the land use permit application site plan matches the conceptual project design reviewed at the SEA-Stop. Confer with the County Biologist if the project design submitted for the land use permit application is different from the original Conceptual Project Design. Substantial changes from the Conceptual Project Design previously vetted by the County Biologist may not meet Development Standards, thus changing the SEA assessment type.

The Case Planner will refer to the SEA-Stop Checklist and attached conceptual project design to confirm the SEA Review determination before processing the permit. The SEA Review determination indicates that

<sup>14</sup> Site plan should show all proposed development, including on-site and off-site ground disturbing activities and vegetation removal.

the project, the design that was reviewed during SEA-Stop, meets the Development Standards of the SEA Ordinance and is providing the required amount of preserved on-site open space.

If the project requires a discretionary land use permit (i.e. a minor CUP or CUP) along with an SEA Review, a statement of SEA Findings is not required. Meeting the Development Standards through an SEA Review determination is the avenue of substantiating the SEA Findings, and the Staff Report for the land use permit should simply discuss how the project meets the SEA Ordinance Development Standards. Do not discuss the SEA Findings in the CUP Findings and Conditions as the SEA Review is not a discretionary process.

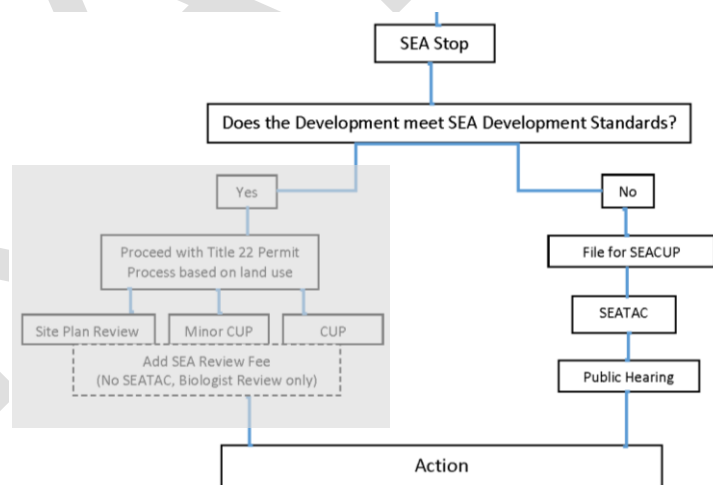
## SEA REVIEW AND CEQA

Projects should refer to the land use permit for CEQA determination. Ministerial land use permits have a statutory CEQA exemption that do not require further discussion. Discretionary land use permits may have CEQA determinations that range from Categorical Exemption to EIR. The Biological Resources section of the Initial Study should include a detailed discussion on how the project meets development standards set in the SEA Ordinance. See the Annotated Initial Study, Biological Resources section, for further instructions on SEA discussion.

## SEA CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT (SEA CUP)

### PROCESSING SEA CUP

Projects that do not qualify for an SEA Review will need to file for an SEA CUP. The land use and SEA impacts will be reviewed under the same SEA CUP. The applicant will provide the application materials required for CUPs and additional materials for the SEA portion of the review (e.g. Biological Constraints Analysis, Biota Report, etc.), as determined by the County Biologist. The required fees will include SEA CUP fee, Biologist Site Visit fee, and SEATAC fee.



There may be situations where the land use is a by-right use but due to the amount of impact to the SEA Resources, the project will require an SEA CUP. In these cases, both the by-right use and SEA impacts will receive a discretionary review through an SEA CUP. Both CUP and SEA Burden of Proofs will be required.

### SEA CUP ANALYSIS

The Case Planner will make sure that the SEA CUP application site plan matches the conceptual project design that was reviewed at the SEA-Stop. Changes from the conceptual project design can change the SEA assessment type. The Case Planner will consult with the County Biologist to review the following:

- ❖ Adequacy of BCA and/or Biota Report
- ❖ Need for and adequacy of additional studies and reports (e.g. rare plant survey, jurisdictional waters delineations, oak tree reports, oak woodlands reports, protocol surveys)
- ❖ Adequacy of proposed mitigations
- ❖ On-site or off-site open space preservation (Refer to Chapter 7)

#### CASE PLANNER'S SEA CUP ANALYSIS

Here are some questions the Case Planner can ask while analyzing the project. The answers will be incorporated into the Staff Report for Public Hearing.

- What are the impacts to SEA Resources within proposed development and adjacent to project site?
- What are the cumulative losses to SEA Resources?
- How well do proposed measures avoid, mitigate, or protect SEA Resources?
- Is the project in compliance with SEA Findings?
- Are there any recommended changes to the proposed project to be in compliance with Development Standards and SEA Findings?
- Does the proposed project meet the relevant objectives and policies of the General Plan?
- Are there any recommended conditions that will ensure the proposed project can meet SEA Findings and relevant General Plan objectives and policies?
- What was SEATAC's determination of project compatibility? Does SEATAC have any applicable recommendations?

#### SEA CUP AND CEQA

All SEA CUPs will need a CEQA analysis since the result will be a discretionary land use permit. The Biological Resources section of the Initial Study should include a detailed discussion of project impacts on SEA Resources. See the Annotated Initial Study, Biological Resources section, for further instructions on SEA discussion. Projects applying for an SEA CUP will also be required to submit a BCA and Biota Report, which will assist in completing the Biological Resources section of the Initial Study.

#### SEATAC REVIEW

SEATAC is an expert advisory committee that assists the Department in assessing a project's impacts on biological resources within SEAs. The scope of SEATAC purview consists of the following:

- ❖ Whether the proposed development is consistent with Section 22.102.060 (SEA Development Standards);
- ❖ Whether the appropriate open space mitigation ratios have been applied and the location of open space is appropriate;
- ❖ Whether the proposed development avoids disturbance to wildlife corridors;
- ❖ Whether the mitigation measures proposed for the project address impacts to SEA Resources;
- ❖ The proposed development's ability to demonstrate compatibility with the SEA Program per Section 22.102.080 (Findings and Decisions).

See the SEATAC Procedures Manual for more information on scheduling a SEATAC agenda item, required documents, and meeting procedures. The goal is for the applicant to efficiently utilize the SEATAC meetings to meet the recommendations of SEATAC.

The Case Planner should complete the SEATAC review before consulting other County Departments on the permit process. The project may need redesign based on SEATAC recommendations and/or mitigation measures. Once the project clears SEATAC and other department consultations, the Case Planner will schedule a public hearing for the SEA CUP.

## SEA ORDINANCE FINDINGS

Projects processed through ministerial review inherently meet the findings required by the SEA Ordinance since Development Standards and open space preservation must be met for a ministerial review designation. However, for a discretionary project to be approved, the decision-making body must be able to justify an action taken based on sufficient findings that meet the burden of proof.

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### BURDEN OF PROOF

Applicants applying for an SEA CUP are required to provide Burden of Proof statements that substantiate how the proposed project will meet each required finding. These statements may assert how the project meets the burden of proof through project design or mitigation measures. Planners will use the Burden of Proof statements provided by the applicant as the base for demonstrating how the project addresses each required finding. The Ordinance, the SEA Implementation Guide, the BCM, the BCA, and/or the Biota Report will also contain information that can be used to justify support for the project. The County Biologist is available for technical assistance.

The purpose of this section is to pose questions to guide applicants and Case Planners through the thought-process of creating adequate responses. These questions are provided as a starting point; they do not cover the full spectrum of circumstances that may need to be considered.

Development in the SEAs must demonstrate how the proposed development is designed to:

- A. *Be highly compatible with the SEA Resources, including the preservation of natural open space areas and providing for the long-term maintenance of ecosystem functions;*
  - ❖ What types of biotic resources are present and where can it be found?
  - ❖ How much undisturbed land will be set aside for mitigation?
  - ❖ What types of vegetation does the set aside land consist of?
  - ❖ Is the vegetation comparable to the type of vegetation being disturbed by the project?
  - ❖ What ecosystem functions are being provided by the areas being disturbed in comparison with the areas to be preserved?
  - ❖ What actions will provide for long-term maintenance of ecosystem functions?
  - ❖ Are there any edge effects from the project? (e.g. the introduction of Argentine ants, potential spread of invasive plants, increased predation on wildlife by domesticated animals, etc.)

- B. Avoid or minimize impacts to the SEA Resources and wildlife movement:
- ❖ Where are the areas with the highest biological value located on the project site?
  - ❖ Where is there potential for wildlife movement across the project site?
  - ❖ What actions will be taken to minimize impacts to areas of biological value?
  - ❖ What actions will be taken to minimize impacts to wildlife movement?
  - ❖ Does the project remove obstacles to wildlife movement or seek to restore natural habitat?
- C. Buffer important habitat areas from development by retaining sufficient natural vegetation cover and/or natural open spaces and integrating sensitive design features;
- ❖ Where are the critical resource areas located on the parcel?
  - ❖ Are there any vegetated area or open space (can be disturbed, agricultural, or non-native vegetation) that act as buffers between the development and critical resource areas?
  - ❖ Does the buffer area act as foraging habitat or a wildlife corridor?
  - ❖ How much of the buffer area will the project retain?
  - ❖ Are locally native plant species being utilized in the landscaping plan to act as a transition zone between the development and natural open space?
  - ❖ Are fences and walls used in such a way as to buffer and protect natural habitat areas from impacts of the development, or do they create obstacles for wildlife movement?
  - ❖ What design features, best management practices, and mitigation measures are being integrated to ensure the SEA Resources are adequately buffered from the development?
- D. Maintain the ecological and hydrological functions of water bodies, watercourses, and their tributaries;
- ❖ Are there water bodies, watercourses, or tributaries on the parcel?
  - ❖ Are they being retained in their natural state?
  - ❖ If not being retained entirely in their natural state, what design features are utilized to ensure continued ecological function, connectivity, and hydrological function of the water resources?
  - ❖ Will water resources be impacted by runoff from the development site or animal keeping facilities into the water resources? If so, what best management practices and design features are proposed to minimize impacts to water quality?
  - ❖ What actions will be taken to preserve the natural state of the water bodies?
- E. Ensure that roads, access roads, driveways, and utilities do not conflict with Priority Biological Resources, habitat areas or migratory paths; and
- ❖ Does the project propose new roads, access road, driveways, and utilities?
  - ❖ If yes, are the roads proposed within areas with Priority Biological Resources, habitat areas or migratory paths?
  - ❖ Are there any design features or mitigation measures to minimize the impacts of roads on critical resource areas (e.g. wildlife crossings)?
  - ❖ Does the road bisect or encroach on migratory pathways?

*F. Promote the resiliency of the SEA to the greatest extent possible. For purposes of this finding, SEA resiliency cannot be preserved when the proposed development may cause any of the following:*

- a. Bisection of the SEA;*
  - b. Removal of the only known location of a Priority Biological Resource;*
  - c. Removal of habitat that is the only known location of a new or rediscovered species; or*
  - d. Other factors as identified by SEATAC.*
- ❖ Does any part of the development footprint bisect the SEA?
  - ❖ Does the project remove the only known location of a Priority Biological Resource?
  - ❖ Does the project remove the only known location of a new or rediscovered species?
  - ❖ Was this project recommended for approval by SEATAC?
  - ❖ Did SEATAC identify additional factors that the project needs to address?
  - ❖ Could the project be redesigned to preserve SEA resiliency as defined in this Finding?

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## PURPOSE OF SEA ORDINANCE

Although it is important to draft Burden of Proof statements with supportive evidence at the project level, the intent of the SEA Ordinance should always be considered. A comprehensive look at the overall project design, impacts, and mitigation measures and how these elements interact with the existing health of the individual SEAs should be conducted during project analysis. Adding a macro level review at the stage of producing the findings will help protect against the possibilities of fragmenting SEAs and threatening their viability.

### **22.102.010 Purpose.**

*The purpose of this Chapter is to conserve the unique biological and physical diversity of the natural communities found within Significant Ecological Areas (SEA) through balancing the overall objective of resource preservation with other critical public needs. The purpose is also to ensure that privately-held lands within SEAs retain the right of reasonable use while avoiding disturbance of SEA Resources by ground-disturbing activities. Developments are reviewed to create environmentally sensitive design that will be compatible with the long-term survival of the SEAs, the connectivity between them, and the biological resources within them. This Chapter will regulate development within SEAs by:*

- A. **Protecting the biodiversity and unique resources** contained in SEAs from incompatible development, as specified in the General Plan;*
- B. Ensuring that projects **reduce the effects of habitat fragmentation** by providing additional technical review of existing resources, potential impacts, and required mitigations;*
- C. Ensuring that development within an SEA **conserves biological diversity, habitat quality, and connectivity to sustain species populations and their ecosystem functions into the future** through environmentally sensitive site design; and*
- D. Directing development to be designed in a manner which **considers impacts** to SEA Resources within the Los Angeles County region.*

## *PUBLIC HEARING*

The public hearing process for SEA CUPs will follow the procedures for public hearing in the zoning code. Although all discretionary land use permits go to public hearing, the level of impacts to SEA Resources will determine which decision-making body will hear the project.

SEA CUPs with minimal impacts to SEA Resources can go through a Hearing Office public hearing. SEA CUPs with extensive impacts to SEA Resources will go through a RPC public hearing. This is due to the elevated level of review conducted and recommendations provided by SEATAC to the decision-making body.

## CHAPTER 5. BIOLOGICAL REPORTS

The SEA Ordinance requires special biological review for any development proposed within an SEA. The biological documentation required to process an application will depend on the extent of impacts to SEA Resources and ability to meet SEA Development Standards, and may include one or all of the following:

- ❖ Biological Constraints Map (BCM)
- ❖ Biological Constraints Analysis (BCA)
- ❖ Biota Report
- ❖ Restoration or Enhancement Plan

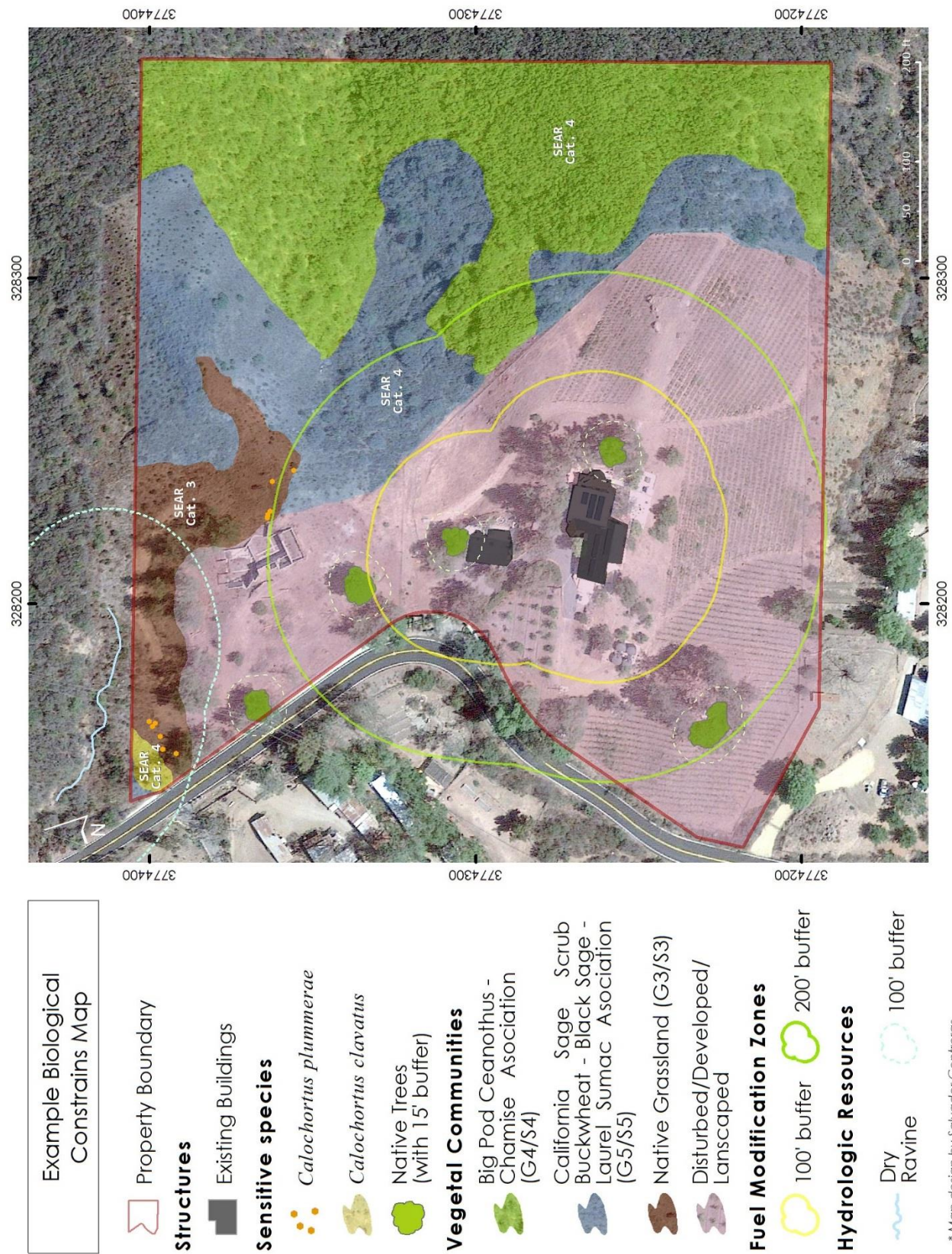
All of the above biological materials must be prepared by a biological consultant on the SEATAC Certified Biologist list maintained on the Department's SEATAC website<sup>15</sup>. These consultants are familiar with the preparation of biological reports for SEA applications, some of which are very similar to the biological sections of Environmental Impact Reports required for CEQA. They will also be able to provide guidance on avoidance of SEA Resources and best practices for minimizing impacts where Development Standards cannot be met. Additional surveys and reports may be required for SEA CUPs depending on the extent and condition of SEA Resources present on the project site; this may include an oak tree report, oak woodland analysis, rare plant survey, protocol survey for special status species, jurisdictional wetlands delineation, or habitat restoration or enhancement plan. The need for such reports will be determined by the County Biologist early in the review process based on the BCM, BCA, and/or a County Biologist site visit.

It is the responsibility of the applicant or applicant's agent to hire one of the listed biologists to prepare the biological reports. Each report will be reviewed by a County Biologist to determine its accuracy and completeness, and the County Biologist may request changes or additions to biological reports to ensure that they are complete and accurate.

Early identification of SEA Resources and biological constraints assists in guiding applicants toward projects that are mindful of biological resources. For this reason, all non-exempt projects within an SEA are required to submit a BCM along with a Conceptual Project Design before applying for a development permit. The County Biologist and Case Planner will review the BCM along with the Conceptual Project Design at the SEA-Stop and again when the application is filed with the final site plans. If the project meets the requirements for SEA Review, the project's biological reporting ends here. If the review of the BCM and Conceptual Project Design at the SEA-Stop reveal that any of the Development Standards are not met, the applicant will have the opportunity to redesign the project while it is still in the conceptual phase or to move forward with an SEA CUP application. If the applicant is unable to, or chooses not to, redesign a project that does not meet all Development Standards, an SEA CUP will be triggered upon application submittal, and additional biological reports, such as those indicated above, may be required. Chapters 2 and 4 provide more detail regarding the SEA assessment process. The primary biological reports required during the SEA assessment process are detailed below.

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<sup>15</sup> Found online at <http://planning.lacounty.gov/agenda/seatac>



**BIOLOGICAL CONSTRAINTS MAP (BCM)**

The BCM is a tool for quickly identifying areas of potential biological significance in the vicinity of the proposed development. In conjunction with a Conceptual Project Design, the BCM is utilized to evaluate whether SEA Development Standards can be met. The BCM must be drawn to scale and depict:

- ❖ the project site, including the full extent of all project parcels, and extending 200 feet out from the parcel(s)' boundaries ("study area");
- ❖ existing development (structures, graded areas, roads, etc.);
- ❖ natural communities, using descriptions in A Manual of California Vegetation<sup>16</sup>, and indicating the SEA Resource Category for each;
- ❖ location, species and trunk diameter (at standard height) of all trees;
- ❖ 15-foot buffers around the driplines (i.e. outer edge of the canopy) of all mature native trees (see SEA Tree Species List, Appendix A);
- ❖ special status species observed during the biological survey as well as any previously recorded observations of special status species within the study area (e.g. using CNDDDB records, prior biological reports, etc.);
- ❖ special habitat features indicative of the presence of a special status or rare animal, such as nests, dens, burrows, and roosts;
- ❖ location and extent of water resources, such as streams, lakes, reservoirs, ponds, wetlands, marshes, seeps, springs, vernal pools, and playas;
- ❖ required setbacks from water resources;
- ❖ any physical site features that are expected to facilitate or restrict wildlife movement across the site, such as ridgelines, remnants or strips of habitat, culverts, fences, etc.;
- ❖ rock outcrops, cliffs, or other geological features that may be utilized by species that specialize in these uncommon structural niches; and
- ❖ protected open space that has been recorded over any part of the project site or on adjacent properties.

The process for preparing a BCM will vary slightly depending on the approach of each individual biologist. Each BCM should be based on the following, at minimum:

- ❖ a review of sensitive biological resources known or expected to occur in the vicinity of the project site utilizing such resources as the California Natural Diversity Database (CNDDDB), California Native Plant Society sensitive plant lists, and other reliable sources;
- ❖ a minimum of one field survey of the project site parcel(s)<sup>17</sup> conducted during the appropriate time of year (typically spring), utilizing survey methods appropriate to the species and habitats being surveyed;

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<sup>16</sup> Sawyer, J.O., T. Keeler-Wolf, and J.M. Evens. 2009. A Manual of California Vegetation, Second Edition. California Native Plant Society, Sacramento, CA. 1300 pp.

<sup>17</sup> Estimate resources within 200 feet of the project site on neighboring parcels if not physically accessible.

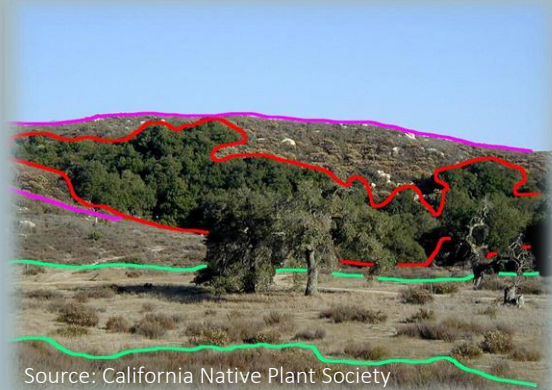
- ❖ geographic coordinates of observed sensitive or rare plants, animals, and special habitat features indicative of the presence of a special status or rare animal;
- ❖ determination of natural communities (i.e. alliances and associations) present on the project site, based on classifications presented in A Manual of California Vegetation, Second Edition;
- ❖ determination of CDFW imperilment<sup>18</sup> and CNPS rare plant rankings<sup>19</sup> for biological resources found on site; and
- ❖ preparation of the biological constraints map.

Additionally, a Conceptual Project Design should be provided either on the BCM or as a separate site plan for the SEA Stop. The Conceptual Project Design should include:

- ❖ the proposed locations of structures,
- ❖ fuel modification/brush clearance zones,
- ❖ utility access and driveways,
- ❖ exploratory testing,
- ❖ other areas of expected disturbance from the proposed project, and
- ❖ any areas of proposed open space to be recorded in order to meet development standards.

#### WHAT IS A NATURAL COMMUNITY?

A natural community is a collection of plants that occur together in a repeating pattern across a landscape. Without even knowing the names of the plants, one can start to detect patterns based solely on the size, shape, and spacing of plants.



Source: California Native Plant Society

By grouping vegetation together in this way, they can be described and mapped, ranked based on sensitivity and rarity, and used to predict habitat for plant and animal species, depict patterns of biodiversity, predict fuel loads and fire risk, and track and evaluate changes over time. Examining and protecting natural communities shifts the conservation emphasis from a single-species approach to a landscape approach that encompasses groups of species and ecosystems, as well the interplay between those groups. This approach recognizes that species never occur in isolation, but rather exist as members of a community of interdependent plants and animals.

#### BIOLOGICAL CONSTRAINTS ANALYSIS (BCA)

A Biological Constraints Analysis (BCA) needs to be submitted with the applicant's SEA CUP application. This report builds on the BCM (which is to be included as part of the report), providing detailed discussions of the biological resources, natural features, and regional context of the project site, and providing a more thorough community-level assessment of the biological resources on the project site and surrounding area. The BCA is based on a combination of literature review and on-site investigations. As is the case with all

<sup>18</sup> <https://www.wildlife.ca.gov/Data/VegCAMP/Natural-Communities>

<sup>19</sup> <http://www.cnps.org/cnps/rareplants/inventory/index.php>

biological reports prepared for SEA analysis, a SEATAC Certified Biological Consultant must prepare the BCA. At minimum, the report should include:

- ❖ a parcel description, including parcel size, location, and SEA;
- ❖ description of natural geographic features, including drainages and watershed with names;
- ❖ description of methodology of biological survey;
- ❖ vegetation data and descriptions;
- ❖ tables and discussions of sensitive fauna and flora;
- ❖ lists of all plant and animal species observed directly or indirectly on site and in adjacent areas of similar habitat;
- ❖ description and map of existing land uses in the project area;
- ❖ description of open space reserves in the area and depiction of wildlife movement/habitat linkage relationships to open space;
- ❖ reference to and relationship with any conservation plans in the vicinity;
- ❖ description of habitats, alliances, associations and vegetative communities in the vicinity with respect to those on site;
- ❖ rough estimates of the overall population sizes of species of flora and fauna on site and in vicinity;
- ❖ description of overall biological value of the area as it fits in to the biotic mosaic and contributes to SEA ecological functions;
- ❖ regulatory framework; and
- ❖ the Biological Constraints Map.

The Department may waive the BCA requirement if the County Biologist determines that biological resources are sufficiently limited or uncomplicated to be adequately addressed by the BCM and Biota Report alone. A complete checklist of items required in the BCA is included Appendix D.

### **BIOTA REPORT**

The Biota Report is required for all SEA CUPs. The applicant will need to work closely with the project biologist on this report since some of the information required will need to be supplied by the applicant (e.g. the project description). The applicant should be prepared to meet with the project biologist to go over the SEA guidelines together for Biota Reports and assign responsibility as appropriate for the different items.

The Biota Report uses the data provided in the BCM, BCA, and additional surveys (i.e. rare plant survey, oak tree report, jurisdictional wetland delineations, special status species surveys, etc.) to provide a more complete analysis of the project's impacts on SEA Resources. The Biota Report includes a discussion of possible and probable impacts from the development and proposes specific mitigation measures and monitoring to address each impact.

The analysis presented in the Biota Report assists in the consistency review of the project, SEA findings, and in preparation of the Initial Study. If Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND) or Environmental Impact Report (EIR) is required for the project, the Biota Report forms the basis of the Biological Resources section

of the MND or EIR. A complete checklist of items required in the Biota Report is included in Appendix D. At minimum, the report will:

- ❖ incorporate the BCM and BCA as documentation of existing conditions on the project site;
- ❖ include a project description;
- ❖ discuss impacts (direct, indirect, and cumulative) to vegetation, special-status species, protected and noteworthy trees, wildlife habitat, and the integrity of the SEA;
- ❖ propose mitigation measures, such as open space preservation and/or habitat restoration;
- ❖ establish a monitoring program;
- ❖ discuss consistency with compatibility criteria; and
- ❖ have a conclusion as to whether any impacts remain after mitigation.

### *RESTORATION OR ENHANCEMENT PLAN*

A restoration or enhancement plan (or equivalent document) is required for any project proposing to restore or enhance natural habitat within an SEA. Habitat restoration is the process of returning a degraded habitat to its pre-existing condition, including restoring self-sustaining ecosystem functions. Enhancement is the process of altering a site to increase one or more functions (e.g., removal of invasive plant species or planting of native species).

Each restoration or enhancement plan should include the following components:

- ❖ A description and map of the area proposed to be restored or enhanced. Include a physical address or description of project location, geographic coordinates, watershed, USGS 7.5' Topographic Quadrangle, and Assessor Parcel Number(s).
- ❖ A description of proposed restoration or enhancement activities and their timelines. Include diagrams, drawings, plans, and/or maps that show the location and dimensions of the proposed restoration. Specify the equipment and machinery (if any) that will be used to complete the project and identify on plans where equipment will enter or exit the area. This description should include incidental and support activities (e.g. staging of equipment and materials, acquisition of plant materials, maintenance, etc.), as well as the principal restoration tasks. Describe best management practices to be employed to prevent sediment from entering watercourses during and after construction and avoidance and/or minimization measures to protect fish, wildlife, and plant resources.
- ❖ An inventory of SEA Resources the project site, including an evaluation of existing habitat quality. Discuss how the project will provide a net benefit to SEA Resources (e.g. species and plant communities that are expected to benefit from the project).
- ❖ Clearly stated goals and objectives and well-defined performance standards (i.e. success criteria). Performance standards should be attainable and measurable, and stated quantitatively in biological terms.
- ❖ A description of methodologies to be followed, demonstrating that the project is consistent with sources that describe best available restoration and enhancement methodologies. List references and attach or provide a weblink to the document(s) when available.

- ❖ A description of maintenance tasks (e.g. weeding, watering, and other routine maintenance needed to ensure restoration success) and monitoring provisions. The plan should state type of maintenance, frequency, duration, and responsible party for both short-term and long-term maintenance. The monitoring section should consist of a qualitative and quantitative monitoring plan, including a map of proposed sampling locations. Monitoring will ideally include both structural (state) and functional (process) attributes and be measured at multiple levels of biological organizations, from population to landscape scale, as appropriate. The monitoring period for each restoration project will depend on the scale and type of restoration and specific site conditions. The SEA Ordinance requires a minimum monitoring period of five years, but some projects may require a longer monitoring period to ensure success. The length of the monitoring period should be based on realistic projections of the restored habitat becoming self-sustaining.

The restoration plan submitted for review does not necessarily have to be developed specifically for SEA review. If a similar document is being/has been prepared for another permitting agency or for CEQA review, the Department will likely accept that document, provided that it contains sufficient detail to evaluate whether the project meets SEA Findings (see Section 22.102.100).

Chapter 6 provides general guidelines and best practices for habitat restoration within SEAs. All restoration projects should incorporate appropriate practices from Chapter 6 in their restoration and enhancement plans.

## CHAPTER 6. HABITAT RESTORATION

Many habitats in SEAs have been lost, degraded, or fragmented due to past development or use. This degradation is generally accompanied by loss and impairment of valuable ecosystem functions and amenities that support the health and wellbeing of the human populations of LA County. The County welcomes habitat restoration projects, which aim to restore SEA Resources and ecosystem services to degraded habitats. When done well, habitat restoration can regain and correct ecosystem process and functions that filter our water and air, help control air temperatures, support biodiversity, and provide movement opportunities for wildlife. Failure to restore degraded ecosystems can result in increased environmental cost later, in the extinction of species or natural communities, and in permanent ecological damage.

To improve the County's monitoring of ecosystem health and encourage best practices in habitat restoration, the SEA Ordinance establishes a mandatory (but free) review of habitat restoration projects within SEAs to ensure that the methodologies and practices being implemented are consistent with the goals and policies of the SEA Program. To qualify for this special Habitat Restoration Review, a project should demonstrate, through a Restoration or Enhancement Plan or the equivalent, that it meets the SEA Findings (Section 22.102.100). The project must also be voluntary and not part of a larger project whose primary purpose is not habitat restoration, such as a land use permit for a non-habitat restoration construction activity. Restoration proposed as part of a larger project that includes non-habitat restoration development will be reviewed as part of the permit for that development. If the restoration project does not demonstrate that it meets the SEA Findings, it will be required to go through the same SEA assessment process as is required for a development project.

### WHAT IS HABITAT RESTORATION?

Habitat restoration is the process of returning a habitat to a close resemblance of its condition prior to disturbance. Successful restoration means that both ecosystem structure and function have been recreated or repaired to such degree that the natural ecosystem processes that contribute to self-maintenance of the ecosystem are operating effectively and without the need for further human engineering or interference. Even small scale or partial ecological restoration can substantially expand or improve SEA Resources and ecosystem services.

For restoration projects that meet the SEA Findings, the Habitat Restoration Review will be used by the County to provide guidance and recommendations for ensuring consistency with the SEA Program. By reviewing and monitoring habitat restoration projects, the County will be able to collect data on where and how restoration is taking place within SEAs, track successes, and identify trends and information gaps. The County will use this information to assist in evaluating the overall success of the SEA Program.



*Source: Puente Hills Habitat Preservation Authority website*

### HABITAT RESTORATION REVIEW

The purpose of Habitat Restoration Review is to assist restoration practitioners in designing sound habitat restoration and enhancement projects that are compatible with the goals of the SEA Program. This chapter is also intended to assist Department Staff in evaluating and approving restoration or enhancement projects. These guidelines and principles are general and intended to be applied flexibly on a site-by-site basis. They do not replace or supersede the permit requirements of any other agency, such as the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Army Corps of Engineers, State Water Resources Control Board, or CA Department of Fish and Wildlife. However, the County review process is intended to allow for coordination with other permit processes by allowing the use of common application materials and content.

While it is not required by the Ordinance, we highly recommend that applicants schedule a pre-submittal counseling meeting with Department Staff to get feedback on the project and its environmental protection measures. Department Staff can provide valuable insight about local conditions, including likely presence of sensitive species, upcoming development in the project vicinity, and other important information that may affect project plans. Attending a pre-submittal counseling meeting will also help ensure that sufficient technical detail is included in the restoration document to be submitted. To schedule a pre-submittal counseling meeting, contact [sea@planning.lacounty.gov](mailto:sea@planning.lacounty.gov).

### BASIC PRINCIPLES

- ❖ The desired outcome for all restoration projects is to create and enhance biologically functional habitats that support target species as well as other species that are important to overall biodiversity.
- ❖ Restoration activities should not begin until the restoration plan is reviewed by the Department.
- ❖ The restoration should be led by an experienced restoration ecologist with documented experience of successful native habitat restoration in the region.
- ❖ The restoration should be performed by experienced restoration contractors specializing in native habitat restoration.

- ❖ There are numerous resources available to guide restoration practitioners on successful restoration strategies for the type of habitat being restored. The proposed methodology should be consistent with such manuals and documents that describe best available restoration and enhancement methodologies for the type of habitat being restored.
- ❖ Restoration should be conducted only on sites where soils, hydrology, and microclimate conditions are suitable for the type of community being restored. Identification of restoration sites should involve an analysis of the suitability of potential sites to support the desired habitat, including comprehensive mapping and documentation of physical and biological site conditions through species surveys, soils surveys, drainage mapping, and constraints analysis.
- ❖ Riparian Restoration: All sites should contain suitable hydrological conditions and surrounding land uses to ensure a self-sustaining functioning riparian vegetation community.
- ❖ Priority should be given to restoring areas that occur adjacent to existing areas of native habitat, especially those that support sensitive species, with the goal of increasing habitat patch size and connectivity while restoring habitat values that will benefit sensitive species.
- ❖ Implementation may be phased over a multi-year timeline (often 5-10 years) to provide for greater diversity of planting ages. Strategies for making prompt mid-course adjustments or corrections in response to changing conditions (e.g. rainfall, fire, flood, etc.) should be included in the restoration plan.
- ❖ Prior to implementation, funding sources and responsible entity to carry out restoration should be secured.
- ❖ Prior to implementation, an explicit work plan should be developed, including schedules and budgets for site preparation, installation and post-installation actions.
- ❖ Practice adaptive management by developing strategies for revisiting implementation or performance standards if necessary. Identify an advisory team of experts to provide advice and direction.

#### **MANDATORY BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES**

- ❖ Stressors. Any stressors causing habitat degradation must be addressed prior to starting restoration.
- ❖ Plant Material. All plant material used for habitat restoration purposes shall consist of native species that are local to the immediate area of the mitigation site. The source of plant material used for habitat restoration shall come from areas within 10 miles of the mitigation site and within 1,000 feet of elevation. All plant material proposed for use in a habitat restoration program shall be inspected by a qualified biological monitor to ensure that all container plants are in good health and do not contain pests or pathogens that may be harmful to existing native plants or wildlife species. Container plants and other landscaping materials (including organic mulches) shall be inspected to ensure they do not contain Argentine ants. Any seeds to be used for habitat restoration purposes shall be collected, cleaned, stored, and packaged by a qualified seed supplier. Native seed mixes shall be inspected by a biological monitor prior to their application to ensure that they contain the proper species and that seed packages are in good condition and do not

contain any pests or pathogens. Diseased or infested plant, seed, or landscape materials shall be removed from the site and transported to an appropriate off-site green waste facility.

- ❖ Invasive Plants. Removal of non-native species in patches of native habitat shall be conducted in such a way as to minimize impacts to the existing native vegetation. Use of chemical methods shall be utilized only as a last resort.
- ❖ Imported Soil. Imported soil shall be free of exotic invasive plant species and shall come from a local source.
- ❖ Oak Trees. In the case of oak trees, seedlings shall be grown from acorns collected in the project vicinity and an acorn derived from a local source of the same species shall be planted within the irrigation zone of the seedling.
- ❖ Schedule. Establishment of restoration/revegetation sites shall be conducted during the appropriate time of year (between October 15 and January 30 for most projects), with planting and/or seeding occurring immediately after the restoration sites are prepared.
- ❖ Maintenance Plan/Guidelines. The Maintenance Plan shall include (1) weed control; (2) herbivory control; (3) trash removal; (4) irrigation system maintenance; (5) maintenance training; and (6) replacement planting.
- ❖ Signage and Fencing. If necessary, the restoration plan shall include specifications on fencing to protect biological resources and restrict human access. Signage specifications shall also be developed to indicate the site is a preserve area and to either indicate that trespassing is not allowed or to instruct visitors to stay on trails if public access is allowed.

## CHAPTER 7. OPEN SPACE

The SEA Ordinance requires protection of open space for proposed development to offset impacts to SEA Resources. Additionally, the SEA Ordinance requires new development to be set back an adequate distance from existing protected open space areas to ensure that fuel modification/brush clearance activities for the proposed development will not extend onto the adjacent open space.

Many wildlife species, particularly carnivores and other wide-ranging species require large areas of suitable habitat for genetically and demographically viable populations. In addition, large contiguous blocks of habitat are more likely to encompass diverse habitat types and are more easily buffered from potential impacts from surrounding developed lands. Most SEAs contain large blocks of habitat generally conforming to a significant topographical feature such as a watershed, major river, butte, etc. These habitat blocks are referred to as "core habitats." Protecting natural open space (i.e., undeveloped land) within and adjacent to or near these large patches will maintain valuable protected core habitats, which, in turn, can protect larger wildlife populations and potentially generate a greater diversity of species and communities.

### SEA REVIEW OPEN SPACE REQUIREMENTS

Development proposing impacts to SEA Resource Categories 2, 3 or 4 are required to preserve the appropriate amount and type of SEA Resources within the project site parcel(s), as shown in the table below. Development undergoing SEA Review should have been vetted at the SEA-Stop to ensure the project site parcel(s) contain appropriate preservation area(s) outside of the development footprint. Open space areas to be preserved cannot be located within any mandated fuel-modification or brush clearance zones, or include any portion of a driveway, street, road, or highway. On-site open space will need to be depicted on the approved site plan. A draft of the deed restriction or covenant should be submitted with the application materials for Department review prior to recordation. The open space covenant or deed restriction must then be recorded with the County Recorder's Office and a copy of the recorded document must be submitted to the Department prior to receiving the stamped site plan, along with a digital delineation of the boundary of the open space area (i.e. submit boundary of recorded open space in a GIS useable format such as .shp, .gdb, .kml/.kmz, .dwg, etc.)

ONSITE PRESERVATION RATIOS FOR SEA REVIEW		
IMPACTS TO:	DISTURBANCE THRESHOLD:	PRESERVATION RATIO:
SEA RESOURCE CATEGORY 1	ANY DISTURBANCE REQUIRES SEA CUP	N/A
SEA RESOURCE CATEGORY 2	LESS THAN OR EQUAL TO 500 SQ FT	2:1
SEA RESOURCE CATEGORY 3	LESS THAN OR EQUAL TO 500 SQ FT	1:1
	MORE THAN 500 SQ FT	2:1
SEA RESOURCE CATEGORY 4	MORE THAN 500 SQ FT	1:1
SEA RESOURCE CATEGORY 5	N/A	N/A

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## ALLOWABLE MECHANISMS

On-site preservation of open space, as required per (Section 22.102.080(A)), must be provided through a permanent deed restriction or land use covenant between the County and the property owner. Both mechanisms are recorded with the County Recorder's Office and should include a map exhibit of the open space area. Any area recorded as open space for this purpose must be left in its natural state.

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## EVALUATING THE ACCEPTABILITY OF ON-SITE PRESERVATION

There may be fewer opportunities to configure open space for projects undergoing SEA Review. In many cases, the BCM will have already identified all the areas that can be preserved on-site with no excess of natural open space available for preservation. In cases where there is an excess of area available for preservation, the preserved area should be configured to minimize fragmentation and maintain the largest possible area-to-edge ratio (i.e., by using the shortest possible perimeter length).<sup>20</sup> Any existing adjacent preserved open space areas should also be considered during on-site open space configuration to compliment and buffer existing off-site open space by connecting to it via the widest possible path whenever possible.

### SEA CUP OPEN SPACE REQUIREMENTS

Developments applying for an SEA CUP are required to provide preserved open space as mitigation. For SEA CUPs, the amount of open space to be required is considered mitigation and is not tied to the ratios in the Development Standards, nor is the open space required to be preserved on-site. The open space preservation requirement for SEA CUPs is dependent on the amount of proposed development, degree of impact, type and quality (e.g. intactness) of SEA Resources being disturbed, location and setting of those SEA Resources, and the project's ability to address the SEA Findings. The preservation ratios listed in the table below will be utilized as a general guideline.

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## ON-SITE PRESERVATION FOR SEA CUP

To evaluate the appropriate location and mechanism for preserved open space, Staff will first need to determine whether an adequate amount of suitable habitat is present on-site. Projects that do not have an adequate amount of suitable habitat available to protect on-site will need to provide any necessary open space preservation off-site, through one of the mechanisms discussed in the "Allowable Mechanisms" section below.

If it is determined that a suitable area of quality natural habitat occurs on the project site parcel(s), the area should be described in the Biota Report, depicted on site plans, and, if found to meet the mitigation needs

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<sup>20</sup> Area-to-edge ratio refers to the compactness of an area. A circle has the maximum area-to-edge ratio of any shape since it has the minimum possible perimeter length. Long, narrow shapes, or shapes with convoluted boundaries have low area-to-edge ratios. Shapes with high area-to-edge ratios are preferable in biological conservation because elements within the interior of the area have a greater likelihood of being far from the edge and are therefore less vulnerable to indirect impacts from development (invasive species, runoff, domestic animals, etc.).

of the development, recorded as permanent open space through one of the allowed mechanisms discussed below. Any area recorded as open space for this purpose must be left in its natural undeveloped state, with no removal of vegetation or disturbance of natural features.

RECOMMENDED PRESERVATION RATIOS FOR SEA CUP	
SEA RESOURCE:	PRESERVATION RATIO:
SEA RESOURCE CATEGORY 1 - State or federally listed species and their habitats - CA Rare Plant Ranks 1,2,3 - Natural Communities Ranked G1/S1 - Water Resources (e.g. wetlands, streams, ponds, lakes, vernal pools, marshes, etc.) BEACH	5:1
SEA RESOURCE CATEGORY 2 - Natural Communities Ranked G2/S2 - Oak Woodlands - Sensitive Local Native Resources - Species of Special Concern and their habitats	4:1
SEA RESOURCE CATEGORY 3 - Natural Communities Ranked G3/S3 ROCK OUTCROPS/ROCKLANDS	3:1
SEA RESOURCE CATEGORY 4 - Natural Communities Ranked G4/S4/G5/S5 - CA Rare Plant Rank 4 NON-NATIVE GRASSLANDS	2:1
SEA RESOURCE CATEGORY 5	1:1

When determining the suitability of habitat for on-site preservation, the following attributes should be considered:

- ❖ is it outside of all mandated fuel-modification and brush clearance zones?
- ❖ does it encompass any hydrological features?
- ❖ does it contain sensitive SEA Resources (e.g. Categories 1-3)?
- ❖ does it include any habitat restoration areas required as project mitigation?
- ❖ does it include sufficient low to moderate value habitat to buffer higher value habitats and elements from indirect impacts from developed areas?
- ❖ what is the extent of on and off-site habitat connectivity?
- ❖ is it part of a wildlife corridor, functioning as a buffer, or integral to a watershed?

Open space should be planned in such a way as to create the maximum amount of habitat connectivity between on-site and off-site areas and to encompass the maximum amount of diversity in type, function and structure of habitats. Whenever possible, natural movement pathways should be protected.

Although large blocks of habitat are generally better than smaller ones, there are cases when smaller patches or ribbons of habitat are vital to preserving wildlife movement or the long-term viability of SEA Resources. For instance, small patches of habitat may be useful as stepping-stones through a developed landscape, or a constrained movement pathway may provide the last tenuous connection between two larger patches of habitat. The loss of such connections may mean cutting off wildlife movement through that landscape. In such cases, it may be preferable to preserve the small patches or ribbon of natural habitat.

“Added value” can be given to proposed open space areas if they also contain unique or valuable habitat linkage resources, additional special-status species, surface waters, or sensitive habitats, etc. Proposed open-space with such added-value characteristics may be allowed to be smaller than the area that would typically be required and still be determined to be consistent with the SEA Program goals, subject to the discretion of the Department and a determination of consistency with the SEA Findings by SEATAC.

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#### OFF-SITE PRESERVATION FOR SEA CUP

Developments that do not have suitable habitat available to preserve open space on-site will be required to provide an equivalent amount of open space preservation off-site. This can be accomplished through one of the mechanisms discussed below. All off-site open space preservation will be reviewed by Department Staff in order to verify that it meets the project’s mitigation requirements.

The following information should be submitted for review:

- ❖ a map of the proposed off-site area (similar to a BCM);
- ❖ a description of the biological resources of the proposed off-site area (similar to a BCA);
- ❖ a description of the mechanism to be used for preservation; and
- ❖ a management plan for the proposed preserved area, including a Habitat Mitigation and Monitoring Program (HMMP) if habitat restoration is required, which identifies responsible parties, funding mechanism, restoration methods, performance standards, and reporting requirements for restoration projects.

Off-site preservation shall be sited within the same affected SEA, and preferably within the same watershed. An area immediately adjacent to the SEA may be considered if the applicant can demonstrate that the area supports the same resource values and is connected with other natural open space. Preserved areas should be configured to:

- ❖ have sufficient self-buffering capacity,
- ❖ be situated adjacent to other natural open space areas, and
- ❖ support resources similar to those disturbed by the project and in the proper ratios.

“Added value” can be given to proposed open-space lands if they also contain unique or valuable habitat linkage resources, additional special-status species, surface waters, or sensitive habitats, etc. Proposed open-space lands with such added-value characteristics may be smaller than the area required by standard preservation ratios and still determined to be consistent with the SEA Program goals, subject to discretion of the Planning Department and a determination of consistency with the SEA Findings by SEATAC.

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## ALLOWABLE MECHANISMS

Following are the allowable mechanisms for open space preservation for SEA CUPs, in order of County preference:

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### DEDICATION TO NON-PROFIT LAND CONSERVATION ORGANIZATION OR GOVERNMENT ENTITY

Land trusts, other conservation organizations and government agencies may choose to protect land by acquiring the property they wish to protect. The acquisition of the land (fee title or fee simple) allows the conservation owner to manage the property to preserve and protect its conservation values. The land can be acquired by purchase, donation or a combination of the two.

Any land being transferred to a non-profit organization or government entity for the purpose of mitigation for a SEA CUP must first record an open space restriction over the entirety of the open space area prior to transferring the ownership in order to ensure the preservation of the open space in perpetuity.

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### PERMANENT ON-SITE DEED RESTRICTION

A deed restriction is a land use restriction that is added to the title of a property. It restricts the use of the property, and for the purposes of the SEA Ordinance, it can be used to ensure that an area of land is preserved as open space in perpetuity. Deed restrictions apply to all future owners of the property and cannot be easily changed or removed. To meet the SEA Ordinance open space requirements, an applicant may place a permanent open space deed restriction on the approved area of their property. The project cannot be approved until the restriction is filed at the County Recorder’s Office.

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### COVENANT BETWEEN COUNTY AND PROPERTY OWNER

A covenant is a formal agreement or contract between the County and the property owner, in which property owner gives the County certain promises and assurances, such as for the purpose of providing and recording an open space restriction over an area of land. The covenant obligates the owner to maintaining the specified area as open space, for a specified period of time (a permanent covenant is required to meet the requirement of the SEA Ordinance). As with a deed restriction, the covenant runs with the land and is binding on all current and future owners of the property. If this mechanism is selected, the open space covenant must be filed at the County Recorder’s Office prior to final permit approval.

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### CONSERVATION EASEMENT

A Conservation Easement is a legal agreement between a landowner and a land trust or government agency in which the land owner places certain restrictions on their property in order to permanently limit the uses

of the land in order to protect its conservation values. The land trust or government agency<sup>21</sup> that accepts the easement is responsible for monitoring the easement to ensure compliance with the terms of the easement and to enforce the terms if violation occurs.

Conservation Easements are one of the most frequently used tools for conserving private land. They are used to permanently limit uses (on all or a portion of the property) that would compromise the conservation values of the property, while allowing the landowner to retain certain reserved rights.

As with a deed restriction or covenant, a Conservation Easement is attached to the property's deed and recorded with the County. It is granted in perpetuity, meaning that all future owners of the land must respect the uses set forth in the document. Open space preservation required per the SEA Ordinance may be provided through a Conservation Easement, either on-site or off-site (but still within the same SEA).

#### CONSERVATION OR MITIGATION BANK

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Conservation and mitigation banks are lands that are permanently protected and managed specifically for their natural resource values. In exchange permanently protecting, managing, and monitoring lands that hold important resources (e.g. wetlands, endangered or threatened species, and supporting habitats), the bank sponsor (owner) is allowed to sell or transfer a specified number of habitat or species credits to developers to offset adverse impacts for their projects.

Conservation and mitigation banks are regulated and approved by certain state and federal agencies that are tasked with protection of natural resources (such as CDFW, USFWS, Army Corps of Engineers, Natural Resources and Conservation Service, National Marine Fisheries Service, US Environmental Protection Agency, etc.). Mitigation banks are generally formed to protect, restore, create, and enhance wetland habitat, and credits are sold for mitigation of unavoidable wetland losses. Conservation banks are targeted more toward protecting threatened and endangered species and habitat, with credits established for the specific sensitive species and habitat types that occur on the site. Although a bank may be established to protect a specific species or water resource, adjacent areas of supporting habitat are generally also included in the mitigation bank.

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<sup>21</sup> California Civil Code 815.3 defines qualified entities as:

- a. A tax-exempt nonprofit organization qualified under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code and qualified to do business in this state which has as its primary purpose the preservation, protection, or enhancement of land in its natural, scenic, historical, agricultural, forested, or open-space condition or use.
- b. The state or any city, county, city and county, district, or other state or local governmental entity, if otherwise authorized to acquire and hold title to real property and if the conservation easement is voluntarily conveyed. No local governmental entity may condition the issuance of an entitlement for use on the applicant's granting of a conservation easement pursuant to this chapter.
- c. A federally recognized California Native American tribe or a non-federally recognized California Native American tribe that is on the contact list maintained by the Native American Heritage Commission to protect a California Native American prehistoric, archaeological, cultural, spiritual, or ceremonial place, if the conservation easement is voluntarily conveyed.

To learn more about mitigation banks, visit the CDFW website on Conservation and Mitigation Banking: <https://www.wildlife.ca.gov/Conservation/Planning/Banking>. For CDFW approved mitigation banks see: <https://www.wildlife.ca.gov/conservation/planning/banking/approved-banks#r4>.

#### CONSERVATION IN-LIEU FEE

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In-lieu fees are another approach to fulfilling mitigation requirements and can be a source of funding for a natural resource management entity to purchase conservation land or Conservation Easements. This is a fee that is provided by a project developer to a mitigation sponsor, such as a natural resource management entity, in lieu of providing required compensatory mitigation. The in-lieu fee is then intended to be used to acquire the required mitigation land or Conservation Easement. In-lieu fees may be pooled with other in-lieu fees to create one or more sites to compensate for the resource functions lost as a result of development. However, in order to meet the open space requirements of the SEA Ordinance, in-lieu fees must be used for the purpose of preserving specific SEA Resources (as determined by those impacted by the proposed development) within the same SEA.

In order to establish the amount of an in-lieu fee, a nexus study must be prepared, and provisions should be made to ensure that the fee is regularly updated in response to changes in real estate values. The in-lieu fee should include costs associated with providing the required mitigation, including the cost of the land or Conservation Easement, cost of identifying and negotiating for the land or easement, surveys, appraisals, title research, legal review, preparation of documents, etc.

## CHAPTER 8. SEA PROGRAM MONITORING

The Conservation and Natural Resources Element of the General Plan identifies strategies for the preservation of natural resources. Specifically, *C/NR-1 SEA Preservation Program*<sup>22</sup> includes strategies such as establishing a Transfer of Development Rights Program, Habitat Conservation Plan, Mitigation Land Banking Program/Open Space Master Plan, or Open Space Land Acquisition Strategy. To maintain and sustain the SEAs, and in preparation for establishing these programs, monitoring disturbance to and protection of SEA Resources is needed.

The monitoring of development within SEAs will also allow the County to better address concerns related to climate change in the region. Some of these concerns include the need to preserve ecosystems that can continue to support the biodiversity of the County despite future changes in temperature and precipitation and increased hazards from wildland fires. SEAs contain evolving biological resources that occur in places at risk from development pressures and climate change. To ensure the continued effectiveness of the SEA Program, the following monitoring practices shall be implemented:

- 1) Tracking approved development within SEAs;
- 2) Tracking habitat restoration within SEAs;
- 3) Mapping habitat information collected through the permitting process; and
- 4) Mapping open space protection resulting from approval of projects.

### TRACKING APPROVED DEVELOPMENT

As part of case processing, information from applicants and public agencies proposing to develop in SEAs will be collected, including information on land use and impacts to SEA Resources. Such information will be compiled into a Countywide SEA database, which will be used for tabulating types and amounts of approved development within each SEA.

### TRACKING HABITAT RESTORATION

Projects proposing habitat restoration either as mitigation or as an independent project will be tracked utilizing information collected during case processing or Habitat Restoration Review. Information to be compiled includes the location, size, and type of restoration being carried out in each SEA.

### MAPPING SEA RESOURCES

A Biological Constraints Map (BCM) is required before most development activity can occur within an SEA. As part of the application package, the applicant will be required to submit their BCM data to the Department in digital form<sup>23</sup> to be integrated into the SEA Resource database. The data acquired in this manner will allow the Department to more accurately map habitat information within unincorporated

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<sup>22</sup> [http://planning.lacounty.gov/assets/upl/project/gp\\_final-general-plan-ch16.pdf](http://planning.lacounty.gov/assets/upl/project/gp_final-general-plan-ch16.pdf)

<sup>23</sup> Map or site plan data displaying SEA Resources, preserved open space, and development footprints must be submitted in a GIS useable format such as .shp, .gdb, .kml/.kmz, .dwg, etc.

County SEAs. In instances where further assessment of sensitive biological resources is needed, a more in-depth Biological Constraints Analysis could be required. In such cases, submittal of final SEA Resource map data will be required as a condition of approval.

### *MAPPING PROTECTED OPEN SPACE*

With the adoption of the SEA ordinance update, the County will also embark on an effort to map protected open space in the unincorporated Los Angeles County. For this effort, any open space area that has legal protections through a permanent on-site deed restriction, Conservation Easement, conservation or mitigation bank, or dedication to a government entity or non-profit land conservation organization, as described in the ordinance, will be considered “Protected open space.” With this information, it will be possible to illustrate the extent to which the SEA Program is meeting the County’s overall goal to develop “permanent, sustainable preservation of genetically and physically diverse biological resources and ecological systems” (Los Angeles County General Plan Goal C/NR 3).

Starting with the California Protected Areas Database (CPAD), California Conservation Easements Database (CCED), and other open space geographic databases maintained by state and local organizations, the Department will establish a baseline of existing protected open space in the unincorporated County (including federal, state, and county owned open space and Conservation Easements monitored by land trusts). The resulting Open Space Database will include polygons of each recorded open space area with corresponding information such as date of adoption, type of protection, size, and ownership.

Protected open space will be monitored as follow:

1. The Department will integrate all newly dedicated open space associated with permits in SEAs into the Open Space Database. Data for new open space dedicated in this manner will also include project and permit numbers and will link to the public record(s) for the associated project.
2. The Department will identify resources to review previously approved projects in SEAs that included protection of open space as mitigation and incorporate those areas into the Open Space Database.
3. The Department will also track in-lieu fees and contributions to mitigation banks associated with SEA CUPs. In the case of in-lieu fees, the County Biologist will review and approve where the fees are used<sup>24</sup>, and any resulting new protected open space will be included in the Open Space Database.

### *REPORTING REQUIREMENTS*

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#### **1. GENERAL PLAN ANNUAL REPORT**

The County is required to prepare a general plan annual progress report on the status of General Plan implementation. The annual report is prepared by the Department and presented to the Regional Planning

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<sup>24</sup> In-lieu fees should be designated for use within the same SEA as that which the associated development is located within.

Commission and the Board of Supervisors. The annual report is the County's mechanism for comprehensively reporting on the following: 1) program implementation; 2) effectiveness of major policies; 3) updates to datasets; and 4) map maintenance.

For the SEAs, the General Plan report is given biennially on the status of the County's SEAs and is required to include:

- ❖ A summary of new development within SEAs approved by DRP;
- ❖ A public comment process for accepting suggestions on improving the SEA Program, and its components;
- ❖ The overall status of biological functions within each SEA, if known;
- ❖ Identification of any new techniques or methods of conservation planning which are, or could, be utilized to enhance the SEA Program;
- ❖ Assessment of the necessity for new SEA studies and any resulting scientific studies undertaken on SEAs;
- ❖ Recommendations for any modifications to the SEA Program, including General Plan goals and policies, SEA boundaries and the SEA Ordinance;
- ❖ Identification of lands within individual SEAs as priority habitats or areas for protection;
- ❖ A description of any ongoing partnerships with conservation agencies and other stakeholders;
- ❖ A current map of SEA lands that are protected in perpetuity through deed restrictions, Conservation Easements, etc.; and
- ❖ The Director's conclusion as to the overall successes and challenges of the SEA Program in implementing General Plan goals and policies.

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## 2. SUSTAINABILITY PLAN INDICATOR

The County's Chief Sustainability Office is in the process of preparing the first sustainability plan for the entire County. One of the important indicators for sustainability identified for the Plan is the health of the County's SEAs. In addition to communicating the status of the SEA Program through the General Plan Annual Report, the County's Sustainability Plan will be another avenue for reporting on the health of the SEAs.

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## 3. SEA WEBSITE

The Department will be updating the SEA webpage housed within the Department's website to digitally provide information as information is gathered and mapped.

## CHAPTER 9. REVIEW PROCEDURES FOR COUNTY PROJECTS

The SEA Program is a component of the County's General Plan, which serves as a countywide advisory document to coordinate land use planning, public service and facilities planning, circulation, environmental management and regional land uses, and transportation initiatives with the 88 cities within Los Angeles County.

As a leader in sustainability, the County has chosen to submit infrastructure work done in the SEAs for a courtesy SEA assessment when the development is located partially or entirely within a mapped SEA. This SEA assessment process for County projects within SEAs will help to ensure that the proposed activities sustain species populations and ecological services into the future through environmentally sensitive site design. This process will allow for the appropriate level of compliance with the least amount of impacts to the maintenance, operation, and future development of those facilities.

### GENERAL COUNTY DEPARTMENT SEA ASSESSMENT PROCESS

County Departments that propose activities defined as development within a mapped SEA may choose to participate in the SEA assessment process. Similar to private development, SEA analysis for County Departments is intended to assist in avoiding or minimizing impacts to SEA Resources.

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#### GENERAL REVIEW PROCESS

The County Department may use Regional Planning's online GIS application, or contact Regional Planning staff, to determine if a proposed ground disturbing activity will be within a mapped SEA. If so, the project manager at the County Department should contact Regional Planning at [sea@planning.lacounty.gov](mailto:sea@planning.lacounty.gov) to initiate a consultation of the proposed activity.

At the end of the initial review of the proposed activity, the County Biologist will issue a recommendation letter which determines the following:

- a. need for any additional biological surveys to identify SEA Resources or evaluate the full extent of impacts;
- b. need for SEATAC consultation regarding impacts of proposed activities and/or appropriateness of proposed mitigation;
- c. ability of the proposed activity to maintain prescribed setbacks as described within the SEA Development Standards; and
- d. compatibility of the proposed activity with the SEA Program.

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#### REVIEW OF EMERGENCY AND HAZARD MANAGEMENT ACTIVITIES

Ground disturbing activities in response to an emergency or for hazard management should be documented and communicated to Regional Planning. Following an emergency or hazard management activity, additional consultations may be initiated between County departments to address how to better coordinate and approach future similar activities or situations, or to discuss appropriate mitigation of impacts to SEA Resources, if needed. In these instances, the County Biologist will issue a recommendation letter, which may include recommendations for:

- a. additional consultations with SEATAC to determine appropriate mitigation for impacts to SEA Resources; or
- b. actions that could be taken in a future similar situation to avoid or minimize impacts to SEA Resources.

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## NOTIFICATION OF DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITY

In addition to the general County Department SEA assessment process, County Departments may notify Regional Planning regarding activity within a mapped SEA on a project by project basis. The purpose of reporting development which may not need further review is to understand and disclose regular maintenance projects by County Departments that are in or adjacent to natural portions of the SEA which may potentially impact the SEAs, and to gain an understanding of this development. It is anticipated that development in this category could be moved to Activities Exempt from Review and Notification in future iterations of this guide.

### DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION (DPR)

Unless constructing new structures or grading within natural portions of an SEA, all the maintenance, construction and other regular activities to meet the standard operational needs at DPR facilities shall be exempt from SEA assessment. When a development project does involve significant removal of natural vegetation within an SEA, the DPR project manager will contact Regional Planning at [sea@planning.lacounty.gov](mailto:sea@planning.lacounty.gov) to initiate a consultation, providing the following information:

- a. project location
- b. project scope or description
- c. site plan
- d. any photographs of the site.

If necessary, a site visit meeting with the County Biologist will be scheduled.

In response to this review, the County Biologist will issue a letter which determines the following:

- ❖ The compatibility of the proposed development activity with the SEA Development Standards and Findings, if applicable.
- ❖ Whether additional review through SEATAC is recommended to determine appropriate SEA Resource mitigation, when needed.
- ❖ Whether additional biological information is needed to provide further recommendations.

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## DPR ACTIVITIES EXEMPT FROM SEA ASSESSMENT AND NOTIFICATION

DPR will not need to notify Regional Planning of the following types of activities: 1) those that occur within already disturbed areas and will not result in expanded environmental impacts to the natural portions of SEAs, 2) those that are for the maintenance and operation of existing facilities, or 3) those that are for emergency or hazard management response.

Maintenance and operational activities include, but are not limited to:

- a. maintenance of existing landscaping including mowing and tree trimming;
- b. new landscaping and related irrigation;
- c. brush clearance;
- d. parking lot repair;
- e. health and safety related work such as slope repair and hazard removal;
- f. ADA compliance (path of travel, parking lot, restroom upgrades, etc.);
- g. Irrigation, plumbing, mechanical (HVAC) and electrical repairs;
- h. concessionaire maintenance and operational activities;
- i. temporary events (renaissance Faire, concerts);
- j. lake maintenance and remediation;
- k. ongoing upkeep, repair, rehabilitation, or reconstruction (in kind) of existing structures and facilities (park offices, gymnasiums, storage, restrooms, visitor centers, community centers, nature centers, sports fields, aquatic centers, etc.);
- l. addition to existing buildings and structures;
- m. installation of accessory structures, such as shade structures, picnic tables and benches, bbq grills, play structures, fitness equipment, outdoor classroom, lighting, signage, fencing, etc.;
- n. grading that does not extend beyond previously disturbed areas;
- o. vegetation control that does not extend beyond previously disturbed areas; and
- p. trail maintenance.

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#### EMERGENCY AND HAZARD MANAGEMENT ACTIVITIES

Activities which are for either emergency response or hazard management (such as fire, flood, or earthquake damage, etc.) are also exempt from prior notification and review, if time constraints would not allow for such review. These types of activities shall be reported to Regional Planning after they have taken place. Additional discussion may take place, if needed, to identify proper mitigation of impacts when needed.

#### DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS (DPW)

DPW development activities such as construction of new facilities or roads located in undeveloped portion of SEAs, which are not exempt under emergency activities, will be submitted for an SEA assessment by Regional Planning during the preliminary planning stages. Maintenance projects or other cash contracts, which occur within an SEA and require the discretionary action of the Board of Supervisors, will also be submitted to Regional Planning for SEA assessment. The DPW project manager will contact Regional Planning at [sea@planning.lacounty.gov](mailto:sea@planning.lacounty.gov) to initiate a consultation, providing the following information:

- a. project location map,
- b. project scope of work,
- c. environmental documents, if available,
- d. regulatory permit requirements, and
- e. any photographs of the site.

If necessary, a site visit meeting with the County Biologist will be scheduled.

In response to this review, the County Biologist will issue a letter which determines the following:

- ❖ The compatibility of the proposed development activity with the SEA Development Standards and Findings, if applicable.
- ❖ Whether additional review through SEATAC is recommended to determine appropriate SEA Resource mitigation, when needed.
- ❖ Whether additional biological information is needed to provide further recommendations.

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#### **DPW ACTIVITIES EXEMPT FROM SEA ASSESSMENT AND NOTIFICATION**

DPW will not need to notify Regional Planning for the following types of activities, which are exempt from SEA assessment and notification: 1) development required immediately in emergency situations to protect buildings, infrastructure or human life, 2) development that occurs at the site of manmade areas that are already disturbed and will not constitute expanded environmental impacts to the natural portions of the SEA, and 3) activities that are for the maintenance and operation of existing facilities,

Maintenance and operational activities include, but are not limited to:

- a. construction/replacement of headwalls at culvert entrance/exit,
- b. placement of rock rip-rap along the bank of a stream to protect/prevent roadway from erosion/failure,
- c. removal of accumulated sediment and/or vegetation as preventative maintenance on streams at bridges or culverts,
- d. shoulder grading that extends beyond previously disturbed areas,
- e. vegetation control that extends beyond previously disturbed areas,
- f. removal of sloughage, slide material, and debris that extends beyond previously disturbed areas,
- g. repair and reconstruction (in kind) of existing retaining walls,
- h. inspection, repair, and replacement (in kind) of existing bridge elements,
- i. repair, and replacement (in kind) of existing bridge elements that require encroachment into the streambed,
- j. proactive sediment, rock, and vegetation removals under bridges as preventative maintenance,
- k. repair, reconstruction, or construction of new rail and timber walls that extend beyond previously disturbed areas,
- l. repair, reconstruction, or construction of new retaining walls that extend beyond previously disturbed areas.

Other projects which may be exempt from initial review are Non-emergency activities routinely carried out by Public Works to maintain operational capabilities of Public Works' and Flood Control District's facilities. Unless an existing facility will be constructing new structures in natural portions of the SEA, all the maintenance, construction and all other regular operational needs at Public Works and Flood Control

District facilities shall be exempt from initial review. This exemption also includes activities in the right-of-ways for roads and floodways. These activities may include, but are not limited to:

- a. pavement maintenance (crack sealing, chip sealing, slurry seal, patching, resurfacing),
- b. shoulder grading that does not extend beyond previously disturbed areas,
- c. vegetation control that does not extend beyond previously disturbed areas,
- d. tree trimming,
- e. repair or replace existing guardrail,
- f. inspection and cleaning of drainage facilities,
- g. cleaning beach drains and clearing existing access roads,
- h. repair and reconstruction (in kind) of existing retaining walls if within previously disturbed areas,
- i. inspection, repair, and replacement (in kind) of existing bridge elements that do not require encroachment into the streambed,
- j. repair and reconstruction of rail and timber walls that does not extend beyond previously disturbed area, and
- k. ongoing upkeep and repair at structures and facilities within SEAs, as marked on the SEA Development Map.

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#### EMERGENCY AND HAZARD MANAGEMENT ACTIVITIES

Ground disturbing activities which are for either emergency response or hazard management are also exempt from prior notification and review, if time would not allow for such review. These types of activities shall be notified to Regional Planning after they have taken place. Additional discussion may take place, if needed, to identify proper mitigation of impacts when needed. Mitigation of these areas disturbed will be treated as “Development subject to notification and review”.

An emergency activity may be defined as any activity necessary to restore operational capabilities of public facilities or activities necessary to protect human lives and properties after a major disaster event, such as earthquakes, flooding, fires, etc. In the event that emergency activities include construction of new facilities, a brief project scope of work and location map will be shared with Regional Planning after the fact. These activities may include, but are not limited to:

- a. replacement of failed culvert pipe,
- b. construction of corrugated metal pipe risers after wildfires,
- c. restoration of failed road segment following a flood,
- d. removal of accumulated sediment, rock, and/or vegetation on streams under/at bridges or culverts if causing stream to flow on roadway,
- e. construction of debris trash racks, or
- f. placement of rock rip-rap along the bank of a stream to protect the roadway from erosion/failure.

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#### NOTIFICATION OF DEVELOPMENT IN SEAS:

DPW will notify Regional Planning of any proposed development within or partially within a mapped SEA on a project by project basis. Further communication between DPW and Regional Planning may also

include discussion of appropriate best practices for regular activities in SEAs, recommendations from SEATAC, and overall development activity within SEAs.

DPW's notification shall consist of:

- ❖ An Assessors Property Number (APN) for the parcel or parcels affected
- ❖ A brief description or name of the type of development (for example: tree removal, construction of a storage building, road maintenance, etc.)
- ❖ The anticipated completion date for the development.
- ❖ The person or division to contact for information about the development.

This information shall be maintained in an excel table or GIS shapefile, and submitted to Regional Planning.

## GLOSSARY

**Alliance:** a vegetation classification unit that is usually defined by a dominant and/or characteristic plant species in the upper layer of vegetation.

**Association:** a vegetation classification unit defined by the characteristic species in the overstory (upper layer) and understory (lower layer), as well as environmental factors.

**Building Pad:** a building site prepared by artificial means including grading, excavation or filling, or any combination thereof.

**Building Site Area:** the proposed areas of a project site that are or will be developed, including the building pad, all graded slopes, all structures, decks, patios, impervious surfaces, and parking areas, but excluding fuel modification zones, one access driveway up to 300 feet long and 20 feet wide, and, if not located within the building pad, one Fire Department required turnaround that is the minimum size to ensure safety and compliance with the LA County Fire Department requirements.

**Covenant:** a formal agreement or contract between the LA County and the property owner, in which property owner gives the County certain promises and assurances, such as for the purpose of providing and recording an open space restriction over an area of land.

**Deed Restriction:** a limitation in the deed to a property that dictates certain uses that may or may not be made of the property.

**Development Footprint:** the area of disturbance for development, including but not limited to, the building pad, all structures, driveways and access, fire department turnarounds, fuel modification areas, and any direct habitat disturbances associated with the development.

**Ecosystem Functions:** natural processes and attributes that result from the complex interactions between living organisms and the physical and chemical components of their ecosystems, which contribute to the self-maintenance of an ecosystem. Ecosystem functions are complex and dependent on a wide variety of factors, such as habitat type, geology, geography, climate, position in the watershed, surrounding land use, and the associated plant and animal communities.

**Ecosystem Services:** the benefits (goods and services) provided to humans as a result of ecosystem functions, such as clean air and water, erosion and sediment control, carbon storage, fertile soils, pollination, raw materials in the form of foods, biofuels, and medicinal resources, buffering against natural disasters, regulation of temperatures, and scenic views.

**Lake:** a large naturally occurring body of water that is surrounded by land. A lake is formed due to pooling of surface-water runoff and/or groundwater seepage in a low spot relative to the surrounding countryside.

**Marsh:** a type of wetland dominated by grasses and other herbaceous plants where water covers the ground for long periods of time. There are many different kinds of marshes, ranging from coastal to inland and freshwater to saltwater. All types receive most of their water from surface runoff, and many marshes are also fed by groundwater.

**Natural Community:** A natural community is a collection of plants that occur together in a repeating pattern across a landscape.

**Oak woodland:** an oak stand having greater than 10 percent canopy cover, or that may have historically supported greater than 10 percent canopy cover (Fish and Game Code 1361, Oak Woodlands Conservation Act).

**Playas/Playa lakes:** a type of temporarily flooded wetland resulting from shallow, circular depressions that are seasonally or semi-permanently filled with rainwater.

**Pond:** a smaller and/or shallower waterbody formed in the same manner as a lake. From the perspective of the SEA Program, there is no fundamental difference between ponds and lakes.

**Reservoir:** a man-made lake that is created when a dam is built on a river, and river water backs up behind the dam.

**River:** a body of flowing water occurring within a channel or linear topographic depression. Rivers are typically larger in size than streams, but, for the purposes of the SEA Program, the terms are synonymous.

**Springs/Seeps:** areas in which groundwater reaches the earth's surface from an underground aquifer and keeps the area wet when there is no obvious source of surface water. This results from an aquifer being filled to the point that the water overflows onto the land surface. Springs usually emerge from a single point and can be the source of a small trickle or stream of water, while seeps generally have a lower flow rate and emerge over a larger area, with no well-defined origin.

**Stream:** a body of flowing water occurring within a channel or linear topographic depression. Streams in natural channels may be further classified as perennial (flowing continuously), intermittent or seasonal (flowing only at certain times of the year), and ephemeral (only flowing in direct response to precipitation). Other terms for streams include river, wash, arroyo, drainage, and creek.

**Vernal pool:** a type of temporarily flooded wetland resulting from a depression in the landscape where a hard underground layer (either bedrock or a hard clay pan) prevents rainwater from draining downward into the subsoils, causing the depression to fill during winter and spring rain events, and gradually evaporate until becoming completely dry in the summer and fall. Because of the weeks of inundation and months of aridity that vernal pools experience, they are not only difficult to identify, but they also provide a unique habitat for numerous endemic rare plants and animals that are able to survive and thrive in these harsh conditions.

**Wildlife corridors** are a type of habitat linkage which consists of natural areas of sufficient width to permit larger, more mobile species (such as foxes, bobcats, and coyote) to pass between larger areas of open space, or to disperse from one major open space region to another. Such areas are generally at least several hundred feet wide, unobstructed, and possess cover, food and water. The upland margins of a creek channel, open ridgelines, open valleys or the bottoms of drainages often serve as naturally occurring major corridors locally.

## APPENDIX A: TREE SPECIES LIST

A 15-foot minimum setback from the dripline of any mature tree species on this list is required for all development projects in SEAs.

<i>Scientific Name</i>	<i>Common Name</i>	<i>Growth Form</i>	<i>Mature Size (Measured on trunk at 4 ½ feet up)</i>
<i>Abies concolor</i>	white fir	tree	5"
<i>Acer macrophyllum</i>	bigleaf maple	tree	3"
<i>Acer negundo</i>	boxelder	tree	8"
<i>Aesculus californica</i>	California buckeye	tree	8"
<i>Alnus rhombifolia</i>	white alder	tree	5"
<i>Calocedrus decurrens</i>	incense cedar	tree	5"
<i>Hesperocyparis nevadensis</i>	Piute cypress	tree	5"
<i>Juglans californica</i>	southern California black walnut	tree	3"
<i>Juniperus californica</i>	California juniper	tree, shrub	All specimens
<i>Juniperus grandis</i>	Sierra juniper	tree	5"
<i>Juniperus occidentalis</i>	western juniper	tree	5"
<i>Juniperus osteosperma</i>	Utah juniper	tree, shrub	5"
<i>Pinus coulteri</i>	Coulter pine	tree	5"
<i>Pinus flexilis</i>	white pine	tree	5"
<i>Pinus jeffreyi</i>	Jeffrey pine	tree	5"
<i>Pinus lambertiana</i>	sugar pine	tree	5"
<i>Pinus monophylla</i>	pinyon pine	tree	5"
<i>Pinus ponderosa</i>	ponderosa pine	tree	5"
<i>Pinus sabiniana</i>	foothill pine	tree	5"
<i>Platanus racemosa</i>	western sycamore	tree	3"
<i>Populus fremontii</i>	Fremont cottonwood	tree	3"
<i>Populus trichocarpa</i>	black cottonwood	tree	3"
<i>Prosopis glandulosa</i>	honey mesquite	tree, shrub	8"
<i>Pseudotsuga macrocarpa</i>	bigcone spruce	tree	5"
<i>Quercus xmacdonaldii</i>	MacDonald oak	tree	5"
<i>Quercus agrifolia</i>	coast live oak	tree	3"
<i>Quercus chrysolepis</i>	canyon oak	tree	5"
<i>Quercus douglasii</i>	blue oak	tree	5"

<i>Quercus engelmannii</i>	Engelmann oak	tree	5"
<i>Quercus garryana</i>	Oregon oak	tree	5"
<i>Quercus lobata</i>	Valley oak	tree	5"
<i>Quercus wislizeni</i> var. <i>wislizeni</i>	interior live oak	tree, shrub	5"
<i>Salix gooddingii</i>	Goodding's black willow	tree	3"
<i>Salix laevigata</i>	red willow	tree	3"
<i>Salix lasiandra</i>	yellow willow	tree	3"
<i>Umbellularia californica</i>	California bay	tree	4"
<i>Yucca brevifolia</i>	Joshua tree	tree	All specimens

## APPENDIX B: SENSITIVE LOCAL NATIVE RESOURCES

The "Sensitive Local Native Resources List" is a list of SEA Resources (e.g. species or natural communities) that the County recognizes as particularly rare and/or sensitive on a local scale, even though they are not listed or ranked as endangered, threatened, sensitive, or rare at the state and federal levels.

The purpose of this list is to aid in the preservation of regional and local genetic diversity. The preservation of locally rare native resources is important for many reasons. For instance, a species may be deemed rare in a part of the County where it occurs only in a few isolated populations or exists at the edge of its geographic range. Such factors actually contribute to greater genetic variation in the species and more resilience in the face of difficult environmental conditions than the same species occurring in the heart of its natural range or in a larger population. Additionally, an isolated population may escape catastrophic events or pathogens moving rapidly through the larger population specifically because of its isolation from that larger population.

Sensitive Local Native Resources may be listed as sensitive County-wide or as sensitive in a particular SEA or group of SEAs. This list is based on vetted documentation, such as peer reviewed articles published in scientific journals and scientifically defensible research and databases compiled by recognized authorities on the subject matter (e.g. Audubon Society for avian species, California Native Plant Society for plants, etc.). Since the list is based on the best available current knowledge of local resources, it is expected to be expanded or changed as new information becomes available.




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The County considers authoritatively defined sensitive local native resources, including species on watch lists, as important resources to identify and conserve.

General Plan 2035, Chapter 9

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### County-wide:

Avian species on the Audubon Society's "Los Angeles County Sensitive Bird List" ( SEE: Los Angeles County Sensitive Bird Species Working Group. 2009. Los Angeles County's Sensitive Bird Species. Western Tanager 75(3):1-11. <https://losangelesaudubon.org/images/stories/pdf/vol.%2075%20no.%2003%20january%20february%202009,%20color%20web%20version.pdf> )

Oak Woodlands (SEE: Los Angeles County Oak Woodlands Habitat Conservation Strategic Alliance. 2011. Los Angeles County Oak Woodlands Conservation Management Plan. <http://planning.lacounty.gov/oakwoodlands/documents>)

**Altadena Foothills and Arroyos SEA:**

Use County-wide list

**Antelope Valley SEA:**

Joshua Tree Woodland

Juniper Woodland

**Cruzan Mesa Vernal Pools SEA:**

Use County-wide list

**East San Gabriel Valley SEA:**

Use County-wide list

**Joshua Tree Woodland SEA:**

Joshua Tree Woodland

Juniper Woodland

**Palos Verde Peninsula and Coastline SEA:**

Use County-wide list

**Puente Hills SEA:**

Use County-wide list

**Rio Hondo College and Wildlife Sanctuary SEA:**

Use County-wide list

**San Andreas SEA:**

Joshua Tree Woodland

Juniper Woodland

Rare Plants of the Liebre Mountains, Los Angeles County ( SEE: Boyd, S. 1999. Vascular Flora of the Liebre Mountains, Western Transverse Ranges, California. (Occasional Publications, No. 5.) Rancho Santa Ana Botanic Garden, Claremont, California, reprinted from Aliso 18(2):93:139, 1999;

[http://www.cnpsci.org/html/PlantInfo/Liebre\\_Rare.htm](http://www.cnpsci.org/html/PlantInfo/Liebre_Rare.htm) )

**San Dimas Canyon and San Antonio Wash SEA:**

Use County-wide list

**San Gabriel Canyon SEA:**

Use County-wide list

**Santa Clara River SEA:**

Juniper Woodland

Pinyon-Juniper Woodland

**Santa Felicia SEA:**

Use County-wide list

**Santa Susana Mountains and Simi Hills SEA:**

Use County-wide list

**Valley Oaks Savannah SEA:**

Use County-wide list

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## APPENDIX C: INVASIVE PLANT LIST

Planting of the following plant species is prohibited within Significant Ecological Areas (SEAs) due to their aggressive growth and potential to degrade native habitats. Any species not listed here that is listed as invasive by the California Invasive Plant Council shall be prohibited within SEAs.

### PROHIBITED TREES AND SHRUBS

Family	Scientific Name	Common Name
Anacardiaceae	<i>Schinus molle</i>	Peruvian pepper
	<i>Schinus polygamus</i>	borocoi, Hardee/Chilean pepper tree
	<i>Schinus terebinthifolius</i>	Brazilian pepper
	<i>Searsia lancea</i>	African sumac
Apocynaceae	<i>Nerium oleander</i>	oleander
Aquifoliaceae	<i>Ilex aquifolium</i>	English holly
Arecaceae	<i>Phoenix canariensis</i>	Canary Island date palm
	<i>Washingtonia robusta</i>	Mexican fan palm
Bignoniaceae	<i>Jacaranda mimosifolia</i>	Jacaranda
Boraginaceae	<i>Echium candicans</i>	pride of Madeira
Chenopodiaceae	<i>Atriplex nummularia</i>	bluegreen saltbush, old man saltbush
Cistaceae	<i>Cistus incanus</i>	hairy rockrose, pink rockrose
	<i>Cistus ladanifer</i>	crimson-spot rockrose, gum rockrose
	<i>Cistus monspeliensis</i>	Montpelier rockrose
	<i>Cistus salviifolius</i>	sageleaf rockrose
Elaeagnaceae	<i>Elaeagnus angustifolia</i>	Russian olive
Euphorbiaceae	<i>Euphorbia dendroides</i>	tree-spurge
	<i>Ricinus communis</i>	castor bean
	<i>Triadica sebifera</i>	Chinese tallowtree
Fabaceae	<i>Acacia baileyana</i>	Bailey acacia
	<i>Acacia cyclops</i>	red-eyed wattle
	<i>Acacia dealbata</i>	silver wattle
	<i>Acacia longifolia</i>	Sydney golden wattle
	<i>Acacia melanoxylon</i>	blackwood acacia
	<i>Acacia redolens</i>	trailing acacia, bank catclaw
	<i>Acacia retinodes</i>	water wattle, swamp wattle
	<i>Albizia julibrissin</i>	mimosa

	<i>Albizia lophantha</i>	plume albizia/acacia
	<i>Caesalpinia gilliesii</i>	yellow bird of paradise
	<i>Caesalpinia spinosa</i>	tara
	<i>Colutea arborescens</i>	bladder senna
	<i>Cytisus multiflorus</i>	white Spanish broom
	<i>Cytisus proliferus</i>	white-flowered tree-lucerne, Canary Island false broom
	<i>Cytisus scoparius</i>	Scotch broom
	<i>Cytisus striatus</i>	Portuguese broom, striated broom
	<i>Genista canariensis</i>	Canary Island broom
	<i>Genista linifolia</i>	flax broom, Mediterranean broom
	<i>Genista monosperma</i>	bridal veil broom
	<i>Genista monspessulana</i>	French broom
	<i>Parkinsonia aculeata</i>	Jerusalem thorn, Mexican Palo Verde
	<i>Robinia pseudoacacia</i>	black locust
	<i>Sesbania punicea</i>	scarlet wisteria tree, rattlebox
	<i>Senna artemisioides</i>	feathery cassia, silver senna
	<i>Senna didymobotrya</i>	African senna, popcorn cassia
	<i>Senna multiglandulosa</i>	wooly senna, buttercup bush
	<i>Spartium junceum</i>	Spanish broom, gorse
	<i>Ulex europaeus</i>	common gorse
Fagaceae	<i>Quercus ilex</i>	Holm oak, holly oak
Geraniaceae	<i>Pelargonium panduriforme</i>	balsam scented geranium
Hypericaceae	<i>Hypericum canariense</i>	Canary Island St. John's wort
Meliaceae	<i>Melia azedarach</i>	china berry, Persian lilac
Moraceae	<i>Ficus carica</i>	fig, edible fig
Myrtaceae	<i>Eucalyptus camaldulensis</i>	red gum
	<i>Eucalyptus citriodora</i>	lemon-scented gum
	<i>Eucalyptus cladocalyx</i>	sugar gum
	<i>Eucalyptus globulus</i>	blue gum, Tasmanian blue gum
	<i>Eucalyptus polyanthemos</i>	silver-dollar gum
	<i>Eucalyptus sideroxylon</i>	red ironbark
	<i>Eucalyptus tereticornis</i>	forest red gum

	<i>Eucalyptus viminalis</i>	manna gum, ribbon gum
	<i>Leptospermum laevigatum</i>	Australian tea tree
Oleaceae	<i>Ligustrum japonicum</i>	Japanese privet
	<i>Ligustrum lucidum</i>	glossy privet
	<i>Olea europaea</i>	olive
Pittosporaceae	<i>Pittosporum crassifolium</i>	karo
	<i>Pittosporum tobira</i>	tobira, mock orange, Japanese cheeseweed
Platanaceae	<i>Platanus acerifolia</i>	London plane tree
Proteaceae	<i>Grevillea robusta</i>	silk oak
Rosaceae	<i>Cotoneaster lacteus</i>	milkflower/Parney's cotoneaster
	<i>Cotoneaster pannosus</i>	cotoneaster
	<i>Malus pumila</i>	paradise apple
	<i>Prunus cerasifera</i>	cherry plum
	<i>Pyracantha angustifolia</i>	pyracantha
	<i>Rubus armeniacus</i>	Himalayan blackberry
Salicaceae	<i>Populus alba</i>	white poplar
	<i>Salix babylonica</i>	weeping willow
Sapindaceae	<i>Acer saccharinum</i>	silver maple
Scrophulariaceae	<i>Buddleja saligna</i>	false olive
	<i>Myoporum laetum</i>	ngaio tree, lollypop tree, myoporum
Simaroubaceae	<i>Ailanthus altissima</i>	tree of Heaven
Solanaceae	<i>Cestrum nocturnum</i>	night jessamine, Night Blooming Jasmine
	<i>Solanum aviculare</i>	kangaroo apple, New Zealand nightshade
	<i>Solanum lanceolatum</i>	orangeberry nightshade, lance leaf nightshade
	<i>Nicotiana glauca</i>	tree-tobacco
Tamaricaceae	<i>Tamarix aphylla</i>	athel tree
	<i>Tamarix chinensis</i>	salt cedar, chanise/fivestamen tamarisk
	<i>Tamarix gallica</i>	French tamarix
	<i>Tamarix parviflora</i>	small-flowered/fourstamen tamarisk
	<i>Tamarix ramosissima</i>	salt cedar, tamarisk
Ulmaceae	<i>Ulmus parvifolia</i>	Chinese elm
	<i>Ulmus pumila</i>	Siberian elm

**PROHIBITED VINES**

Family	Scientific Name	Common Name
Apocynaceae	<i>Araujia sericifera</i>	bladder vine, bladderflower
	<i>Vinca major</i>	periwinkle
Araliaceae	<i>Hedera canariensis</i>	Algerian ivy
	<i>Hedera helix</i>	English ivy
Asparagaceae	<i>Asparagus asparagoides</i>	Bridal Creeper, Smilax Asparagus, African asparagus fern
Asteraceae	<i>Delairea odorata</i>	Cape ivy, German ivy
Caprifoliaceae	<i>Lonicera japonica</i>	Japanese honeysuckle
Fabaceae	<i>Lathyrus latifolius</i>	perennial sweetpea, everlasting peavine
Polygonaceae	<i>Muehlenbeckia complexa</i>	mattress vine, maidenhair vine
Rosaceae	<i>Rubus ulmifolius</i> var. <i>ulmifolius</i>	elmleaf blackberry
Tropaeolaceae	<i>Tropaeolum majus</i>	garden nasturtium

**PROHIBITED SUCCULENTS AND CACTUS**

Family	Scientific Name	Common Name
Aizoaceae	<i>Carpobrotus chilensis</i>	sea fig
	<i>Carpobrotus edulis</i>	Hottentot fig
	<i>Malephora crocea</i>	coppery mesemb
	<i>Mesembryanthemum crystallinum</i>	crystalline iceplant, common iceplant
	<i>Mesembryanthemum nodiflorum</i>	slenderleaf iceplant
Aizoaceae	<i>Aptenia cordifolia</i>	heartleaf iceplant, baby sun-rose
	<i>Conicosia pugioniformis</i>	narrow-leaved iceplant, roundleaf iceplant
	<i>Delosperma litorale</i>	ice plant, seaside deloperma
	<i>Drosanthemum floribundum</i>	Rosy ice plant, showy dewflower
Cactaceae	<i>Opuntia microdasys</i>	bunny-ears
Crassulaceae	<i>Aeonium arboreum</i> var. <i>arboreum</i>	blackrose
	<i>Aeonium haworthii</i>	pinwheel
	<i>Cotyledon orbiculata</i> var. <i>oblonga</i>	pig's ear

**PROHIBITED AQUATIC PLANTS**

Family	Scientific Name	Common Name
Amaranthaceae	<i>Alternanthera philoxeroides</i>	alligatorweed
Haloragaceae	<i>Myriophyllum aquaticum</i>	parrot feather watermilfoil, Parrot's feather
	<i>Myriophyllum spicatum</i>	Eurasian/America milfoil, spike watermilfoil

Hydrocharitaceae	<i>Egeria densa</i>	Brazilian waterweed
	<i>Hydrilla verticillata</i>	hydrilla
Pontederiaceae	<i>Eichhornia crassipes</i>	water hyacinth
Salviniaceae	<i>Salvinia molesta</i>	giant waterfern, giant salvinia

#### PROHIBITED FERNS

Family	Scientific Name	Common Name
Dryopteridaceae	<i>Cyrtomium falcatum</i>	Hollyfern, Japanese netvein hollyfern
Pteridaceae	<i>Pteris cretica</i>	Cretan brake fern, ribbon fern, table fern
	<i>Pteris vittata</i>	ladder brake

#### PROHIBITED ANNUAL AND PERENNIAL HERBS

Family	Scientific Name	Common Name
Alliaceae	<i>Ipheion uniflorum</i>	spring star flower
	<i>Allium vineale</i>	wild garlic
Amaranthaceae	<i>Amaranthus hybridus</i>	prince's feather
Amaryllidaceae	<i>Amaryllis belladonna</i>	belladonna lily, naked ladies
	<i>Narcissus tazetta</i>	narcissus, paper white
	<i>Pancratium maritimum</i>	sea daffodil
Apiaceae	<i>Ammi majus</i>	Queen Anne's lace
Apocynaceae	<i>Asclepias curassavica</i>	Mexican butterfly weed, bloodflower milkweed
Araceae	<i>Zantedeschia aethiopica</i>	common calla, calla lily
Asphodelaceae	<i>Asphodelus fistulosus</i>	onionweed, asphodel
Asteraceae	<i>Ageratina adenophora</i>	eupatorium, eupatory, sticky snakeroot, thoroughwort, croftonweed
	<i>Arctotheca calendula</i>	Cape weed
	<i>Arctotis venusta</i>	blue-eyed African daisy
	<i>Argyranthemum foeniculaceum</i>	Canary Island marguerite, dill daisy
	<i>Bellis perennis</i>	English daisy
	<i>Calendula officinalis</i>	pot marigold
	<i>Centaurea cineraria</i>	dusty miller
	<i>Centaurea cyanus</i>	bachelor's button
	<i>Coreopsis tinctoria</i>	calliopsis, golden tickseed
	<i>Cosmos bipinnatus</i>	garden cosmos
	<i>Cynara cardunculus</i>	artichoke thistle
	<i>Dimorphotheca ecklonis</i>	Cape marguerite, African daisy
	<i>Dimorphotheca fruticosa</i>	trailing African daisy, shrubby daisybush

	<i>Dimorphotheca sinuata</i>	African daisy
	<i>Gazania linearis</i>	treasureflower, gazania
	<i>Glebionis coronaria</i>	annual chrysanthemum, garland/crown daisy
	<i>Leucanthemum vulgare</i>	ox-eye daisy
	<i>Oncosiphon piluliferum</i>	globe chamomile
	<i>Ratibida columnifera</i>	Mexican hat
	<i>Tanacetum parthenium</i>	feverfew
	<i>Tanacetum vulgare</i>	tansy, common tansy
Boraginaceae	<i>Heliotropium amplexicaule</i>	clasping heliotrope
Brassicaceae	<i>Erysimum cheiri</i>	English wallflower
	<i>Lobularia maritima</i>	sweet alyssum
	<i>Lunaria annua</i>	money plant
	<i>Matthiola incana</i>	hoary stock
Caryophyllaceae	<i>Gypsophila elegans</i>	annual baby's breath
	<i>Lychnis coronaria</i>	dusty miller, rose campion
	<i>Silene vulgaris</i>	bladder campion
	<i>Saponaria officinalis</i>	bouncing bet, bouncing betty, soapwort, goodbye summer
Chenopodiaceae	<i>Atriplex semibaccata</i>	Australian saltbush
	<i>Kochia scoparia ssp. scoparia</i>	summer cypress, red sage, Mexican fireweed
Commelinaceae	<i>Tradescantia fluminensis</i>	wandering Jew
Convolvulaceae	<i>Dichondra micrantha</i>	Asian ponysfoot
	<i>Ipomoea indica</i>	blue dawn flower, blue morningglory
Crassulaceae	<i>Sedum album</i>	white stonecrop
Cyperaceae	<i>Carex texensis</i>	Texas sedge
	<i>Cyperus difformis</i>	variable flatsedge, umbrella sedge
	<i>Cyperus involucratus</i>	umbrella plant
Dipsacaceae	<i>Dipsacus fullonum</i>	Fuller's teasel, wild teasel
Euphorbiaceae	<i>Euphorbia lathyris</i>	gopher spurge
Fabaceae	<i>Coronilla valentina ssp. glauca</i>	Mediterranean crownvetch
	<i>Lathyrus odoratus</i>	annual sweetpea
	<i>Lotus corniculatus</i>	bird's foot trefoil
	<i>Trifolium repens</i>	white clover
Geraniaceae	<i>Geranium robertianum</i>	herb Robert
	<i>Pelargonium grossularioides</i>	gooseberry geranium

Hypericaceae	<i>Hypericum perforatum</i>	klamathweed, St. John's wort
Iridaceae	<i>Chasmanthe floribunda</i>	African flag
	<i>Crocasmia x crocosmiiflora</i>	montbretia, crocosmia
	<i>Iris germanica</i>	German iris
	<i>Iris pseudacorus</i>	yellow flag, yellow water iris
Lamiaceae	<i>Melissa officinalis</i>	lemon balm
	<i>Mentha spicata</i>	spearmint
	<i>Mentha suaveolens</i>	apple mint, pineapple mint
	<i>Nepeta cataria</i>	catnip
Linaceae	<i>Linum grandiflorum</i>	flowering flax, garden flax
Lythraceae	<i>Lythrum salicaria</i>	purple loosestrife
Malvaceae	<i>Abutilon theophrasti</i>	velvetleaf
	<i>Alcea rosea</i>	hollyhock
Martyniaceae	<i>Proboscidea louisianica ssp. louisianica</i>	ram's horn, common devil's claw
	<i>Proboscidea lutea</i>	devil's claw
Myrsinaceae	<i>Anagallis arvensis</i>	scarlet pimpernel, birds-eye
Nyctaginaceae	<i>Mirabilis jalapa var. jalapa</i>	four o'clock, wishbone bush
Onagraceae	<i>Oenothera sinuosa</i>	wavy-leaf gaura
	<i>Oenothera speciosa</i>	Mexican evening-primrose, pink ladies
	<i>Oenothera xenogaura</i>	scented gaura, Drummond's gaura, Drummond's bee blossom
Oxalidaceae	<i>Oxalis articulata ssp. rubra</i>	windowbox woodsorrel
	<i>Oxalis corniculata</i>	creeping wood-sorrel
	<i>Oxalis pes-caprae</i>	buttercup oxalis, Bermuda buttercup, yellow oxalis
Papaveraceae	<i>Papaver somniferum</i>	opium poppy
Plantaginaceae	<i>Digitalis purpurea</i>	foxglove
	<i>Linaria bipartita</i>	clovenlip toadflax
	<i>Linaria dalmatica ssp. dalmatica</i>	Dalmatian toadflax
	<i>Linaria maroccana</i>	baby snapdragon
	<i>Linaria pinifolia</i>	pine needle toadflax
Plumbaginaceae	<i>Limonium perezii</i>	Perez's sea lavender
	<i>Limonium ramosissimum</i>	Algerian sea lavender
	<i>Limonium sinuatum</i>	wavyleaf sea lavender
Polygonaceae	<i>Persicaria capitata</i>	pink knotweed, Himalayan smartweed
	<i>Rumex conglomeratus</i>	clustered dock, creek dock
Portulacaceae	<i>Portulaca oleracea</i>	purslane

Ranunculaceae	<i>Consolida ajacis</i>	rocket larkspur
Resedaceae	<i>Reseda alba</i>	white mignonette
Rosaceae	<i>Duchesnea indica</i> var. <i>indica</i>	Indian mock-strawberry
Rutaceae	<i>Ruta chalepensis</i>	fringed rue
Scrophulariaceae	<i>Scrophularia peregrina</i>	Mediterranean figwort
	<i>Verbascum blattaria</i>	moth mullein
Solanaceae	<i>Salpichroa origanifolia</i>	Pampas lily of the valley
	<i>Solanum elaeagnifolium</i>	silverleaf nightshade
Valerianaceae	<i>Centranthus ruber</i>	red valerian, Jupiter's beard
Verbenaceae	<i>Verbena bonariensis</i>	purpletop vervain, tall vervain
	<i>Verbena pulchella</i>	moss verbena
Violaceae	<i>Viola odorata</i>	sweet violet

#### PROHIBITED GRASSES

Family	Scientific Name	Common Name
Poaceae	<i>Agropyron cristatum</i> ssp. <i>pectinatum</i>	crested wheatgrass
	<i>Agrostis gigantea</i>	redtop, giant redtop bentgrass
	<i>Agrostis stolonifera</i>	creeping bent
	<i>Aira caryophyllea</i>	silver hairgrass
	<i>Alopecurus pratensis</i>	yellow foxtail grass, meadow foxtail
	<i>Arundo donax</i>	giant reed
	<i>Briza maxima</i>	rattlesnake grass
	<i>Cortaderia jubata</i>	jubata grass
	<i>Cortaderia selloana</i>	Pampas grass
	<i>Cynodon dactylon</i>	Bermuda grass
	<i>Festuca arundinacea</i>	tall fescue, alta fescue, reed fescue
	<i>Festuca myuros</i>	mouse-tail fescue, rattail sixweeks grass
	<i>Festuca perennis</i>	Italian ryegrass
	<i>Festuca pratensis</i>	meadow fescue
	<i>Festuca trachyphylla</i>	hard fescue, rough leaved fescue
	<i>Holcus lanatus</i>	velvet grass
	<i>Hordeum marinum</i> ssp. <i>gussoneanum</i>	sea barley
	<i>Melinis repens</i> ssp. <i>repens</i>	natal grass, ruby grass
	<i>Pennisetum clandestinum</i>	kikuyu grass
	<i>Pennisetum setaceum</i>	African/Crimson fountain grass
	<i>Pennisetum villosum</i>	feathertop
	<i>Poa annua</i>	annual bluegrass

	<i>Poa pratensis ssp. pratensis</i>	Kentucky bluegrass
	<i>Poa trivialis</i>	rough blue grass
	<i>Polypogon monspeliensis</i>	rabbitsfoot grass
	<i>Stenotaphrum secundatum</i>	Saint Augustine grass

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## APPENDIX D: SEA CHECKLISTS & WORKSHEETS

1 – SEA STOP CHECKLISTS

2 – SEA RESOURCE DISTURBANCE WORKSHEET

2 – BIOLOGICAL CONSTRAINTS ANALYSIS (BCA) CHECKLIST

3 – BIOTA REPORT CHECKLIST

## SEA-STOP CHECKLIST – PART I BCM & CONCEPTUAL PROJECT DESIGN

A Case Planner and County Biologist shall initial in the designated section, indicating that the items have been provided and reviewed.

BCM CHECKLIST	COMPLETE
<b>I. Biological Constraints Map (BCM)</b>	
A. Shows all project site parcel(s) boundaries <sup>25</sup>	
B. Existing development (structures, graded areas, roads, etc.)	
C. Vegetation communities (utilizing Sawyer, Keeler-Wolf, Evens 2009 classifications), and indicating CDFW Natural Community Rarity Ranking, extending out to 200-feet from the project site boundaries <sup>26</sup>	
D. Trees: show location of all trees and indicate species. For native trees, record DBH and show canopy extent and a 15 foot protected zone (measured from the dripline).	
E. Location of observed and previously recorded sensitive species (e.g. from site survey, previous biological reports, or identified through CNDDDB records, etc.)	
F. Delineated boundaries of water resources, such as rivers and streams (including intermittent and ephemeral drainages), lakes, reservoirs, ponds, wetlands, marshes, seeps, springs, vernal pools, and playas AND required setbacks.	
G. Important physical site features that are expected to provide important habitat for sensitive species (e.g. rock outcrops) or facilitate or restrict wildlife movement, such as ridgelines, culverts, fences, etc.	
H. Open space that has been recorded over or adjacent to any part of the subject parcel.	
<b>Biologist's Initials:</b>	
<b>II. Conceptual Project Design</b>	
I. Either on the BCM or on a separate plan, show the conceptual development footprint of the proposed project, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- all anticipated graded areas</li> <li>- existing and proposed structure locations</li> <li>- fuel modification to 200-feet from all structures</li> <li>- utility access</li> <li>- driveways and parking areas</li> <li>- landscaped areas</li> <li>- exploratory testing locations</li> </ul>	
<b>Planner's Initials:</b>	

<sup>25</sup> Include all parcels or lots involved with the land use project.

<sup>26</sup> Vegetation communities can be estimated offsite using visual surveys from the project site and adjacent roads or trails in conjunction with aerial imagery and existing data.

## SEA-STOP CHECKLIST – PART II

SEA Stop Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Case Planner: \_\_\_\_\_

County Biologist: \_\_\_\_\_

Address &amp; APN(s) of project site: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## SEA assessment type:

☐

SEA Review

☐

SEA CUP

## Biologist Site Visit Needed?

☐

Yes

☐

No

**Adequacy of BCM**

Does the Biological Constraints Map adequately document the biological resources on the project site?

☐

Yes

☐

No

**Adequacy of Conceptual Project Design**

Does the Conceptual Project Design include adequate information to evaluate the ability of the development to meet Development Standards?

☐

Yes

☐

No

**Ability to Comply with Development Standards**

Check the boxes below to indicate that the BCM and conceptual project design adequately demonstrate the ability of the development to comply with the SEA Development Standards. Some development standards (such as fence materials, outdoor lighting, and glass reflectivity) do not need to be shown in conceptual project design, but the applicant should be made aware of these requirements, and they should be specified in site plan documents when the application is submitted.

**SEA Resources**☐

SEA Resource Category 1 – None disturbed.

☐

SEA Resource Category 2 (use Worksheet)

☐

Native Trees – development maintains a 15 ft protected zone for all mature native trees.

☐

No special habitat feature utilized by a Species of Special Concern will be disturbed.

☐

SEA Resource Category 3 (use Worksheet)

☐

SEA Resource Category 4 (use Worksheet)

☐

Building Site Area does not exceed 20,000 sq ft.

☐

Trees – is there a minimum setback of 15 feet from the dripline of all mature native trees?

**Water Resources**☐

Development is set back the required distances from water resources.

**Area-wide Development Standards**

- ☐ Impermeable fencing, walls, and enclosures limited to the development footprint
- ☐ All other fencing is wildlife permeable (open design, lowest horizontal element a minimum of 18 inches from the ground, highest horizontal element a maximum of 42 inches from the ground)
  - ☐ open design and made of materials that are visible to wildlife
  - ☐ bottom edge of the lowest horizontal element is a minimum of 18" from the ground
  - ☐ top edge of the highest horizontal element is a maximum of 42" from the ground
- ☐ Fencing materials do not contain spikes, glass, razor wire, barbed wire, or other materials harmful to wildlife
- ☐ Windows will be comprised of non-glare/non-reflective glass.
- ☐ Outdoor lighting will be directed away from natural habitat areas and night sky, and abide by the standards of the Rural Outdoor Lighting District.
- ☐ Fuel Modification & Brush Clearance will not encroach into preserved open space offsite or proposed preserved open space onsite.
- ☐ Landscaping plans will not include any species listed on the Prohibited Invasive Plant List.
- ☐ Proposed on-site preserved open space does not include driveways, streets, roads, or highways.

**Specific to Land Use**

- ☐ Crops
  - ☐ only non-invasive species
  - ☐ located entirely within irrigated fuel modification zone (Zones A & B)
- ☐ Exploratory Testing<sup>27</sup>
  - ☐ uses existing roads or previously disturbed areas
  - OR –
  - ☐ uses track mounted drill rigs
- ☐ Land Divisions – at least 75% of the net area of the development site will be preserved open space.
- ☐ Large Lot Parcel Maps - resulting parcels have a reasonable potential for future development that meets the standards for SEA Review.

**Additional Biological Reports Needed**

- ☐ BCA    ☐ Biota Report    ☒ Restoration/enhancement plan    Oak ☐ Tree Report    Other ☐ \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ Rare Plant Survey    ☐ Protocol Survey for \_\_\_\_\_    ☐ Jurisdictional Waters/Wetlands

**Staff Comments & Recommendations:**

<sup>27</sup> Counsel the applicant regarding vegetation removal, site stabilization, and restoration requirements.

## SEA Resource Disturbance Worksheet

### STEP 1: Category 1 SEA Resources

1a. Does the project propose any disturbance to a vegetation community ranked G1 or S1?

☐ Yes --> **STOP SEA CUP Required**

☐ No

1b. Does the project propose any disturbance to plants listed by CNPS as RPR 3, 2A or B, or 1A or B?

☐ Yes --> **STOP SEA CUP Required**

☐ No

1c. Does the project propose any disturbance to species (plants, animals, or occupied habitat) listed by state or federal agencies as Endangered, Threatened or Rare?

☐ Yes --> **STOP SEA CUP Required**

☐ No

1d. Does the project propose any direct impact to water resources?

☐ Yes --> **STOP SEA CUP Required**

☐ No --> if no to all 4 questions, go to STEP 2

### STEP 2: Category 2 SEA Resources

2a. Does the project propose disturbance to more 500 square feet of a vegetation community ranked G2 or S2 or oak woodland?

☐ Yes --> **STOP SEA CUP Required**

☐ No --> complete table below to determine preservation ratio

2b. G/S 2 Vegetation Preservation Ratio Table

1. Amount to be Disturbed:  sq ft	2. Remaining to be Preserved:  sq ft	3. Preservation Ratio ( <i>area preserved : area disturbed</i> )
---	--	---

Preservation Ratio is 2:1 or better?

☐ Yes --> Go to next question

☐ No --> **STOP SEA CUP required**

2c. Does the project propose to disturb or remove any dens, burrows, roosts, nests, or other special habitat features [expected to be] utilized by Species of Special Concern?

☐ Yes --> **STOP SEA CUP Required**

☐ No --> Got to next question

2d. Does the project propose to encroach into the protected zone of any protected native tree?

☐ Yes --> **STOP SEA CUP Required**

☐ No --> if no to all & 2:1 preservation, go to STEP 3

### STEP 3: Category 3 SEA Resources

3a. Does the project propose disturbance to any vegetation community ranked G3 or S3?

☐ Yes --> complete table below to determine preservation ratio.

☐ No disturbance to Category 3 SEA Resources. --> Skip to STEP 4

**3b. G/S 3 Vegetation Preservation Ratio Table**

1. Amount to be Disturbed:  sq ft	2. Remaining to be Preserved:  sq ft	3. Preservation Ratio ( <i>area preserved : area disturbed</i> )
---	--	---

Area to be disturbed is less than 500 square feet, Preservation Ratio is 1:1 or better?

☐ Yes --> Go to STEP 4

☐ No --> **STOP SEA CUP required**

Area to be disturbed is more than 500 square feet:

Preservation Ratio is 2:1 or better?

☐ Yes --> Go to STEP 4

☒ No --> if no to all 3 questions, go to STEP 3

**STEP 4: Category 4 SEA Resources**

4a. Does the project propose disturbance to more than 500 square feet of vegetation communities ranked G4, G5, S4 or S5?

☐ Yes --> complete table 4b below to determine preservation ratio.

☐ No --> skip to 4c.

**4b. G/S 4/5 Vegetation Preservation Ratio Table**

1. Amount to be Disturbed:  sq ft	2. Remaining to be Preserved:  sq ft	3. Preservation Ratio ( <i>area preserved : area disturbed</i> )
---	--	---

Preservation Ratio is 1:1 or better?

☐ Yes --> Go to STEP 5

☐ No --> **STOP SEA CUP required**

4c. Does the project propose disturbance to more than 10 individuals of woody RPR 4 plant species (e.g. shrubs) or over 500 square feet of occupied habitat for herbaceous RPR 4 plant species?

☐ Yes --> complete table 4d below to determine preservation ratio

☐ No --> Go to STEP 5

**4d. RPR 4 Plant Species Preservation Ratio Table**

1. Area of occupied habitat for RPR 4 herbaceous plants to be Disturbed:  sq ft	2. Remaining to be Preserved:  sq ft	3. Preservation Ratio ( <i>area preserved : area disturbed</i> )
4. Number of Individual woody species (e.g. shrubs) to be Disturbed:	5. Remaining individuals to be Preserved:	6. Preservation Ratio ( <i># preserved : # disturbed</i> )

Preservation Ratio is 1:1 or better? ☐ Yes --> Go to STEP 5

☐ No --> **STOP SEA CUP required**

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**BIOLOGICAL CONSTRAINTS ANALYSIS (BCA) CHECKLIST**

The Case Planner and County Biologist shall initial in the designated section, indicating that the items have been included in the report and that the report is adequate and ready for SEATAC review.

**BIOLOGICAL CONSTRAINTS ANALYSIS (BCA) CHECKLIST****COMPLETE**

<b>I. COVER / SPINE / TITLE PAGE</b>	
A. Project name, type of report (Biological Constraints Analysis)	
B. County identification numbers (Project number, CUP number, APNs).	
C. Applicant name and contact information	
D. SEA name(s)	
E. Name of head biologist and consulting company directive information	
F. Date of report	
<b>II. INTRODUCTION</b>	
A. Project Description	
1. Project name, type of report, address of project	
2. County application identification numbers including APNs	
3. Applicant name and contact information	
4. SEA name(s)	
5. Supervising biologist, company, directive information	
6. Parcel and Acreage Table (for more than one parcel)	
7. Location	
a) Map of regional features in vicinity showing project location, and including all drainages and wetlands	
b) Color USGS topographic map with outline of project parcels, SEA, open space resource areas, etc.; scale about 1:24000	
c) Color orthogonal aerial showing project parcels, SEA, open space, etc.	
	<b>Planner Initials:</b>
B. Description of Natural Geographic Features	
1. Summary of known biological resources including relation to:	
a) Landforms and geomorphology	
b) Drainage and wetland features	
c) Soils; include soil map	
d) Vegetation communities	
e) SEA criteria and resources	
2. Color site photography with keys	
3. Summary of biological resources and pertinent literature review	
C. Methodology of Biological Survey	
1. Table of surveys (surveys approximately 1 year old or more recent)	
2. Text description of survey methods	
3. Table of information on biologist(s) and other contributors for BCA; appendix of contributors' experience	
4. Proof of permits or Memoranda of Understanding for trapping shall be in the appendix.	

<b>III. BIOLOGICAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SITE</b>	
A. Vegetation Data and Descriptions	
1. Vegetation map of Sawyer, Keeler-Wolf, Evens (2009) alliances and associations of vegetation types, relevé locations	
2. Vegetation cover table	
3. Map of trees (for jurisdictional oaks, State and County, an oak tree report will be needed. Oak tree reports will be in an appendix.)	
4. Summary of vegetation site habitats in relation to soil, sensitivity, rainfall, potential for impact (Only necessary if there is a possibility of rare plant occurrences that would be made possible by the presence of some important soil type or geological formation)	
5. CD/DVD of georeferenced files for vegetation data as ESRI .shp including metadata (may be combined with other project data on CD/DVD)	
B. Fauna and Flora Sensitive Species Tables and Discussion	
1. Table of sensitive species known from the region, sensitivity rankings, habitat requirements, and likelihood of occurrence on site—with rationale for likelihood determination.	
2. Table of break points on rough estimate of population size (appendix)	
3. Paragraphs for each sensitive species on characteristics that might lead to project impact. Listed species paragraphs in separate section.	
C. Maps of occurrence for sensitive species	
D. Wildlife movement/habitat linkage analysis with map of site and movement areas	
E. Floral and faunal compendia (all plant and animal species observed directly or indirectly on site, and for animals, in adjacent areas of similar habitat), updated for latest observation if multiple versions of the BCA are submitted, version date	
F. All voucher collections shall be deposited in an appropriate, recognized public institution, and shall be tabulated in the floristic and faunal lists.	
<b>IV. CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SURROUNDING AREA</b>	
A. Description of Existing Land Uses in the Project Area	
B. Table of development projects in the vicinity and summary discussion (acreage, units, etc.)	
C. Map of land uses	
D. Description of Open space reserves in the area and depiction of wildlife movement/habitat linkage relationships to open space. Include known conservation and open space easements in perpetuity. Refer to maps II.A.7	
E. Reference to and relationship to any conservation plans in the vicinity	
F. Description of Habitats, alliances, associations and vegetative communities in the vicinity with respect to those on site	
G. Rough estimates of the overall population sizes of species of flora and fauna on site and in vicinity fauna on site and in vicinity	
H. Description of overall biological value of the area: fit to the biotic mosaic; contribution to surrounding area and SEA ecological functions	
<b>V. CONCLUSION</b>	
A. Regulatory framework	
B. Summarized biological data with respect to regulatory framework	
C. Biological Constraints Map	

D. Explicit statement of SEA/SERA/ESHA acreages total and in project parcels; explicit statement of length of watersheds on project parcels and total; potential affected area of watercourses	
E. Recommendations for further studies needed to prepare Biota Report	
<b>VI. BIBLIOGRAPHY</b>	
A. Bibliography of references cited in text	
B. Bibliography of general references used to prepare document but not cited	
<b>VII. APPENDICES [as appropriate]</b>	
A. Table of biologists and other contributors; Preparer and other contributor qualifications; permits, MOUs	
B. Vegetation alliance relevé data	
C. Oak Tree Report for sites with jurisdictional native oak trees (5" DBH and larger)	
D. Focused and floristic survey reports.	
E. Floral and faunal compendia	
F. Copies of meeting minutes from previous SEATAC/ERB reviews of project	
G. Correspondence with State and Federal trustee agencies	
H. Completed BCA Checklist (this table)	
I. SEA-Stop Checklist with BCM and Conceptual Project Design	
J. Digital Copies of BCA as .pdf for final version; georeferenced files of vegetative data and sensitive species occurrences.	
	<b>Biologist Initials:</b>

**BIOTA REPORT CHECKLIST**

The Case Planner and County Biologist shall initial in the designated section, indicating that the items have been included in the report and that the report is adequate and ready for SEATAC review.

**BIOTA REPORT CHECKLIST****COMPLETE**

<b>I. COVER / SPINE / TITLE PAGE</b>	
A. Project name, type of report (Biota Report)	
B. County identification numbers (Project number, CUP number, APNs).	
C. Applicant name and contact information	
D. SEA name(s)	
E. Name of head biologist and consulting company directive information	
F. Date of report	
<b>II. INTRODUCTION</b>	
A. Summary of project impacts and mitigation	
B. Project description	
1. Project name, type of report, address of project	
2. County application identification numbers including APNs	
3. Applicant name and contact information	
4. SEA name(s)	
5. Supervising biologist, company, directive information	
6. Parcel and Acreage Table (for more than one parcel)	
7. Location (Note, these maps/photos may be excerpts or contain less detail than those submitted in the BCA so long as they provide an adequate indication of the project location and the surrounding area)	
a) Map of regional features in vicinity showing project location, and including all drainages and wetlands	
b) Color USGS topographic map with outline of project parcels, SEA, open space resource areas, etc.; scale about 1:24000	
	<b>Planner Initials:</b>
8. Project and alternatives description	
a) Site plans; at least one superimposed on vegetation map with topo lines	
b) Grading plans; at least one superimposed on vegetation map, topo lines	
c) Description of disturbance schedule	
d) Permits requested	
e) Alternatives	
<b>III. IMPACTS</b>	
A. Regulatory framework	
B. Tables	
1. Table of impact for sensitive vegetation and species	
2. Table of vegetation type and proposed changes	
3. Table of acreage additions and deductions of SEA land	
C. Discussion of logic on conclusions of significance	

D. Maps [may be combined, but each of the following should be illustrated in one form or other]	
1. Map(s) of vegetation constraints.	
2. Map of proposed vegetation impacts (grading and fuel-modification superimposed on vegetation map)	
3. Map of noteworthy or protected tree species, sensitive plant observations (and animal if highly resource dependent, e.g. aquatics, burrowing owl, etc.), showing removals and disturbance proposed.	
4. Regional and local maps of wildlife corridors and habitat linkages [including regional and statewide efforts (e.g. South Coast Missing Linkages, California Essential Connectivity Project, Puente Hills “Missing Middle”, etc.), as well as any site-specific features (ridgelines, drainages, culverts, fencing, etc.) that may facilitate or constrain movement.	
E. Discussion of Impacts—direct (grading and fuel-modification), indirect, and cumulative impacts to each of the following must be discussed	
1. Vegetation, with note of any sensitive vegetation types (refer to State and Global sensitivity rankings included on the CDFW Natural Communities List) or noteworthy natural stands that may be unique to the site.	
2. Special-status species, including any locally-recognized sensitive species (e.g. the Los Angeles Audubon list of Los Angeles County’s Sensitive Bird Species) and unusual sightings of otherwise common taxa (e.g. <i>Gilia diegensis</i> in the Liebre Mountains, <i>Petalonyx thurberi</i> in the Santa Clara River, etc.).	
3. Protected and noteworthy trees	
4. Wildlife habitat, including wildlife corridors and habitat linkages	
5. Project impact on integrity of the SEA	
F. Discussion of project consistency with SEA CUP compatibility criteria	
1. That the requested development is designed to be highly compatible with the biotic resources present, including the setting aside of appropriate and sufficient undisturbed areas	
2. That the requested development is designed to maintain water bodies, watercourses, and their tributaries in a natural state	
3. That the requested development is designed so that wildlife movement corridors (migratory paths) are left in an undisturbed and natural state	
4. That the requested development retains sufficient natural vegetative cover and/or open spaces to buffer critical resources, habitat areas, or migratory paths	
5. That the roads and utilities serving the proposed development are located and designed so as not to conflict with critical resources, habitat areas, or migratory paths	
<b>V. MITIGATION MEASURES</b>	
A. List of impact and mitigation measures that apply. The following aspects of SEA impact must be addressed:	
1. Acreage remaining as natural open space and percentage of original	
2. Existing designated open space on and adjacent to the parcel in question	

3. Short and long term measures & preservation instruments that will provide protection of natural open areas	
4. Type and amount of landscaping; utilization of locally-indigenous native plants; prohibition on invasive plants	
<b>V. MONITORING PROGRAM</b>	
A. Directly applicable to addressing impact; measurement of biological response to mitigation	
B. Performance standards	
C. Alternatives for failure to meet performance standards	
D. Funding and bond establishment	
E. Schedule	
F. Responsible parties	
G. Adaptive management	
<b>V. BIBLIOGRAPHY</b>	
A. Bibliography of cited references	
B. Bibliography of general references used to prepare report but not cited	
<b>V. APPENDICES</b>	
A. Table of biologists and other contributors; Preparer and other contributor qualifications; permits, MOUs	
B. Oak Tree Report for sites with jurisdictional native oak trees (5" DBH and larger)	
C. Focused and floristic survey reports.	
D. Copies of meeting minutes from previous SEATAC/ERB reviews of project	
E. Completed Biota Report Checklist (this table)	
F. Correspondence with State and Federal trustee agencies	
G. CD or DVD of BCA and Biota reports as .pdf & Georeferenced shapefiles (ESRI .shp, geographic) for vegetative maps and observations of sensitive species	
	<b>Biologist Initials:</b>